



# **HOT BOOKS IN THE COLD WAR**

**THE CIA-FUNDED SECRET WESTERN  
BOOK DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM BEHIND  
THE IRON CURTAIN**

**ALFRED A. REISCH**

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*The CIA-Funded Secret Western Book  
Distribution Program Behind  
the Iron Curtain*

ALFRED A. REISCH



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*To Sam Walker, George Minden  
and all the dedicated men and women  
who broke down the cultural  
Iron Curtain*



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## INTRODUCTION

# Book Distribution as Political Warfare

*Mark Kramer*

Throughout the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union waged “political warfare” against each other and their respective allies. This form of interaction, unlike the global military standoff between the two sides, was intended by each superpower to affect the perceptions, attitudes, motives, and—ultimately—political behavior of the other side’s organizations, groups, individuals, and government officials.<sup>1</sup> The aim of the operations was to overcome (or at least diminish) the opposition of those who were most hostile, to gain the allegiance of those who were neutral or uncommitted (i.e., to “win their hearts and minds”), to reinforce the loyalty of supporters, and, in wartime, to erode the enemy’s will to fight.

Political warfare long predated the Cold War, but it was never more widely or intensively practiced than during the five decades from 1941 to 1991. Bilateral cultural exchanges; Soviet financial assistance to foreign Communist parties; U.S. funding for pro-democratic groups and labor unions in foreign countries; disinformation and propaganda campaigns conducted by the Soviet State Security Committee (KGB); the covert dissemination of anti-Communist leaflets and publica-

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<sup>1</sup> For a survey of literature on this topic as of 2002, see Kenneth A. Osgood, “Hearts and Minds: The Unconventional Cold War – Review Essay,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 4, No. 2 (Spring 2002): 85–107. Numerous other important studies have appeared since then, including Osgood’s own book, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower’s Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2006).



tions behind the Iron Curtain by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA); the KGB's sponsorship of front organizations and anti-nuclear movements in the West and the Third World; short-wave radio broadcasts by Voice of America (VOA), Radio Free Europe (RFE), Radio Liberty (RL), and other official radio stations; the USSR's distribution of periodicals to promote Communist views; cultural programs funded by the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) to support democratic capitalist values—all of these were forms of political warfare.

Alfred Reisch's important book provides the first in-depth look at a specific type of political warfare against the Soviet bloc that went wholly unnoticed in the West during the Cold War, namely, programs funded by the CIA to distribute books to key individuals, libraries, research institutes, cultural organizations, and universities and schools in six Warsaw Pact countries (Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, and the Soviet Union) from mid-1956 through 1991. Until 1970, the CIA funding for book distribution in Soviet-bloc countries was channeled through entities of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, with administrative jurisdiction divided between the Free Europe Committee (FEC), which handled Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, and the three Soviet Baltic republics (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), and the Radio Liberty Committee's secret Bedford Publishing Company, which covered the Soviet Union apart from the three Baltic states. In 1970, a few years after the CIA's secret funding of RFE and RL had been publicly disclosed, the ensuing controversy over the matter led to the end of RFE's role in the book distribution. A CIA front organization, the International Advisory Council (IAC), acquired administrative jurisdiction over what had been the FEC's book distribution activities. Five years later, the two main book distribution programs—one managed by the IAC and the other by the RLC's Bedford Publishing Company—were merged under the jurisdiction of the International Literary Center (ILC), another CIA front organization. This unified arrangement lasted until the book distribution programs finally ended in late 1991.<sup>2</sup> Although

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<sup>2</sup> I use the term "book distribution program" throughout this introduction to refer to several interrelated activities—the mailing of books and other publications to specific elites, the mailing of publications in response to requests generated by the dissemination of lists, the provision of books to East

precise numbers for the entire period cannot be tallied from the currently available records, careful estimates suggest that the programs involved the transfer of roughly ten million books and other publications to recipients in the six targeted countries.

Some of the major aspects of the FEC/IAC book distribution program were discussed in 2003 by John P. C. Matthews, a retired U.S. official who had taken part in the program during its initial four years.<sup>3</sup> In a brief, sparsely documented article published in a specialized journal dealing with foreign intelligence operations, Matthews described what he called a “secret Marshall Plan for the mind.” A few other former U.S. officials who were involved in Cold War-era political warfare have published overviews of U.S. activities that briefly mention the book distribution programs, and the U.S. Department of State has put out several volumes in its *Foreign Relations of the United States* series that feature declassified documents pertaining to (or least advertizing to) the efforts to transfer books to individuals and libraries in the USSR and Eastern Europe.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, in 2001 the publication of a huge volume transcribing four decades’ worth of correspondence between the RFE Polish radio broadcaster Jan Nowak-Jeziorański and the long-time editor of the Polish émigré journal *Kultura*, Jerzy Giedroyc, shed fascinating light on the CIA-funded distribution of books and other publications in Poland from mid-1956 through the end of the 1980s.<sup>5</sup>

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European and Soviet visitors abroad, and the carrying-in of books and journals by individuals on behalf of FEC/IAC/ILC distributors.

<sup>3</sup> John P. C. Matthews, “The West’s Secret Marshall Plan for the Mind,” *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 16, No. 3 (July/September 2003): 409–27.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain* (University Park, PA.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 136–9; Gene Sosin, *Sparks of Liberty: An Insider’s Memoir of Radio Liberty* (University Park, PA.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 282, n. 10; and Documents 103, 106, 114, 147, and 149 in U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976*, Vol. XII: *Soviet Union, January 1969–October 1970* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2006), hereinafter cited as *FRUS* with years and vol. nos.

<sup>5</sup> Jan Nowak-Jeziorański and Jerzy Giedroyc, *Listy, 1952–1998*, ed. by Dobrosława Platt (Warsaw: Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Ossolineum, 2001).

Important as these earlier publications are, no detailed overview has appeared until now of the 35-year-long effort to smuggle books, journals, and other items into six Communist countries. Much of that gap has now been filled by Reisch, who himself took part in the surreptitious distribution of books in Hungary for fifteen years and later worked as an analyst of Hungarian affairs for RFE/RL. Drawing on the Minden Collection and the RFE/RL Corporate Records obtained through archival research at the Hoover Institution Archives (while all his Mandatory Declassification Review requests to the CIA were unsuccessful), Reisch has produced the most comprehensive assessment now available of the CIA's book distribution programs. To be sure, some significant gaps in the historical record unavoidably persist. For the period through 1974, Reisch focuses on the FEC/IAC program and does not delve into the program overseen by the RLC's Bedford Publishing Company, which covered the bulk of the USSR. (The records of the Bedford Publishing Company, unfortunately, have not yet been released.) Moreover, Reisch's account of the unified ILC program is necessarily incomplete about certain periods (mainly the 1980s), because some collections of archival documents relating to these efforts are still off-limits. Nevertheless, even though a few noteworthy lacunae remain, Reisch goes as far as one can in evaluating the U.S. book distribution programs on the basis of evidence that is now available. His analysis is enriched by insights he gained from his own experiences in the 1960s and 1970s, supplementing the valuable information he gleaned from archival documents and the testimony of former book distributors and other veterans of the CIA-sponsored programs. Reisch's study is a major addition to the burgeoning literature on U.S. political warfare against the Soviet bloc.

Several features of the book distribution programs, as discussed by Reisch, are particularly worth highlighting.

First, until the early 1960s, the book distribution program in each of the six target countries focused only on key elites, not the wider public. U.S. officials were eager to reach mass audiences as well, but they had initially decided that shortwave radio broadcasts (transmitted by RFE, RL, and VOA in the local languages) were the best means of achieving that goal. The book distribution programs were set up for a different purpose, namely, to affect the perceptions, beliefs, and expectations of political and intellectual elites ("leadership groups"),

who would have at least some capacity to influence the Communist regimes' policies directly or indirectly. This orientation began to change in the first half of the 1960s, when the FEC under George Minden's leadership expanded the scope of the program to cover young people, especially university students, as well as professors, teachers, clergy, writers, artists, doctors, and other key elites such as economists and journalists. By the mid-1970s, students had become the largest single group of person-to-person book recipients, followed by professors and teachers.

Second, from the start, senior CIA officials attached great importance to the two book distribution programs, according them a "special place" in "the world of covert propaganda" for reasons outlined by the head of the CIA's covert operations in a secret report in 1961: "Books differ from all other propaganda media, primarily because one single book can significantly change the reader's attitude and action to an extent unmatched by the impact of any other single medium.... [T]his is, of course, not true of all books at all times and with all readers—but it is true significantly often enough to make books the most important weapon of strategic (long-range) propaganda."<sup>6</sup> The premium placed on the book distribution programs helps to explain why these efforts survived basically intact until the Soviet regime collapsed.

Third, even before the 1956 Hungarian revolution and Soviet invasion of Hungary instilled greater caution in U.S. political warfare, the book distribution program was strikingly circumscribed and modest in its objectives. Although FEC officials hoped that East European elites who received books would become "infected with the contagion of change," this was to be "change" of an entirely peaceful and limited sort. The initial guidelines for the book distribution program, issued by the FEC in early September 1956, emphasized that books making "total attacks on communism" should be excluded from the program and that all "mailings should [simply] favor 'revi-

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<sup>6</sup> Cited in U.S. Congress, Senate, Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, *Foreign and Military Intelligence: Final Report*, 7 vols., 94<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> Sess., 24 April 1976, Book I, 193.

sionist' trends among the new elites."<sup>7</sup> In mid-October 1956, exactly a week before the revolution began in Hungary, the FEC set out the book distribution program's objectives in a memorandum declaring that "the possibilities for overthrowing the communist regimes [in Eastern Europe] either through 'liberalization' from without or by revolution from within are becoming increasingly remote." The memorandum envisaged an "alternative path to freedom in the satellite countries" involving the "transformation of the communist system by an evolutionary process," a position at odds with public U.S. statements about "rolling back" Communism in Eastern Europe.<sup>8</sup> Even though the outbreak of the Hungarian revolution on 23 October 1956 and the large-scale intervention by Soviet troops into Hungary on 4 November to crush the revolution caused U.S. officials to end all flights of RFE hydrogen balloons (which had been dropping anti-Communist leaflets in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Poland) and to issue new guidelines for RFE's broadcasts, the Hungarian crisis and its traumatic aftermath had no comparable lasting impact on the FEC's book distribution program, which had been extremely circumspect from the very start. The distribution of books in Hungary was briefly suspended, and the program's administrative jurisdiction was consolidated, but otherwise the impact was nil. Book distribution in Hungary swiftly resumed, and the whole program was expanded to pursue the same limited goals.

Far from seeking to encourage the violent (or even non-violent) overthrow of the Communist regimes in the Soviet bloc, the FEC's program was designed merely to generate support among elites for reformist policies and for less subservient relationships with Moscow, the very sort of approach that Władysław Gomułka was initially pursuing in Poland after returning to power in October 1956.<sup>9</sup> U.S. officials believed

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<sup>7</sup> "Confidential Mailing Plan," Memorandum from the Plans and Analysis Department of the Free Europe Press, 6 September 1956, in Hoover Institution Archives (Stanford University), RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 1700, Folder 10.

<sup>8</sup> "Proposal for a Research Program to Support Broadcasts to Bureaucrats," Memorandum for RFE, 16 October 1956, in Hoover Institution Archives, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 81, Folder 14.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Marek Jabłonowski and Stanisław Stępka (eds.), *Październik 1956 roku: Początek erozji systemu* (Pułtusk: Akademia Humanistyczna imienia Aleksandra Gieysztora, 2007).

that if other East European governments adopted similar approaches, it would facilitate evolutionary change in the region that would benefit U.S. interests. Under this scenario, however, Communist rule in the region would not come to an end, and indeed Communist elites who advocated liberalization would be explicitly supported by the book distribution program. If, as expected, these elites adopted far-reaching reforms, this would help to avert destabilizing unrest in the Soviet bloc.

Fourth, the book distribution programs were kept secret throughout their existence. Unlike RFE and RL, whose mission and broadcasts were publicized as widely as possible in order to attract potential listeners in the Eastern bloc, U.S. efforts to transfer books were never publicly disclosed. Because the book distribution programs were always kept secret, they were funded throughout their existence by the CIA. In this respect, too, the smuggling of books differed crucially from RFE and RL, which received financing from the CIA only until 1971, when the U.S. Congress cut off the covert funding and adopted interim budgets for the radios for two years before shifting jurisdiction of them (and VOA) to the newly created Board for International Broadcasting in 1973. This realignment was necessitated after the radical leftwing publication *Ramparts* and several mainstream newspapers in early 1967 had publicly revealed the two radios' (and other organizations') secret connections with the CIA.<sup>10</sup> Those disclosures made it untenable for the CIA to continue funding the radios, but no such problems arose for the book distribution efforts.

Fifth, an assessment of the book distribution programs' effectiveness is more feasible than an assessment of RFE's and RL's effectiveness. Many recent evaluations of U.S. and Soviet political warfare during the Cold War have been unduly swayed by our knowledge of how the Cold War ended. Although the United States won the Cold War and the Soviet Union lost, this does not necessarily mean that the United States was more adept than the Soviet Union in using political warfare. The outcome of the Cold War was determined by many factors, and we cannot assume *a priori* that the two sides' relative success in waging

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<sup>10</sup> "Special Reports: Three Tales of the CIA," *Ramparts Magazine*, April 1967, 15–28; and Max Frankel, "Widening C.I.A. Debate: Government's Right to Influence Role of Private Groups Held Key Question," *The New York Times*, 18 February 1967, 15.

political warfare played an appreciable role. The net impact of political warfare on the Cold War is something to be explored on the basis of archival evidence rather than simply being taken for granted.

By the same token, unless we pore over the empirical evidence, we have no way to judge whether a specific political warfare program (in this case, the distribution of books to individuals, libraries, institutes, and other organizations in Warsaw Pact countries) actually achieved its intended goals. Far too often, journalists and scholars studying RFE, RL, and other U.S. Cold War-era political warfare entities have been wont to characterize these organizations as extremely effective without actually demonstrating that this was the case. The two radios may well have been as effective as these studies claim, but most of the literature has failed to provide convincing evidence of this or even to ask the question properly.<sup>11</sup> A valid appraisal of RFE's and RL's efficacy would have to address several points. First, scholars would need to determine how many people in the East-bloc countries actually listened to RFE and RL. These estimates should be based not on the indirect methodologies developed during the Cold War by RFE/RL consultants, whose surveys suffered from problems of selection bias and non-random sampling, but on declassified archival evidence in the former Communist countries, especially the once-secret studies undertaken periodically on behalf of the local state security organs.<sup>12</sup> Second, scholars would need to determine whether the Communist authorities genuinely believed that people who listened to the radios would be swayed by the "pernicious propaganda" of "hostile forces." One key element here would be to gauge the amount of effort and resources devoted by the Communist regimes to countering the broadcasts, a subject about which there is ample evidence in the archives. Third, scholars would need to determine whether a significant number of listeners' opinions and perceptions were actually

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<sup>11</sup> The best study so far of RFE/RL is A. Ross Johnson, *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty: The CIA Years and Beyond* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2010).

<sup>12</sup> The state security records on this matter are freely available in Poland, the Czech Republic, the Baltic countries, and Bulgaria. Even in Russia, many of the relevant KGB documents from the 1950s through the mid-1980s are freely accessible in the CPSU Propaganda Department files at the Russian State Archive of Recent History (RGANI).



influenced by the broadcasts and, if so, in what direction. Fourth, to the extent that the radios did alter a sizable number of people's attitudes, we would need to consider whether these changes had an appreciable impact on the course and outcome of the Cold War.

Similar criteria can be proposed for a five-part evaluation of the efficacy of the book distribution programs.

First, we need to consider how many books and other publications were distributed to individuals, libraries, cultural organizations, research institutes, universities, and schools in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union either through postal mailings or through person-to-person transfers (the latter mode was most often used for books with overt political content). Even if the currently available records do not permit us to construct a full 35-year time-series for each country, we should aim to get as close to that as possible.

Second, we need to determine whether the publications reached their intended recipients and, if so, whether the recipients actually read them. When the recipient was a library or institute, the task of identifying who (if anyone) read the items is more complicated but is crucial in weighing the programs' efficacy.

Third, if the recipients did read the books or other publications, we need to ascertain whether those items influenced the readers' political views and perceptions in ways intended by the U.S. agencies that funded and disseminated the books. Because the book distribution programs during their initial decade were focused on members of "leadership groups," the programs at that point could potentially have been deemed effective even if they altered the views of only a minuscule number of the recipients. If the elites whose views were changed by the publications were highly influential in policymaking circles, that potentially would be enough to yield a large payoff for the United States and validate the purpose of the book distribution program. The hope was that these elites in their subsequent dealings with policymakers (and with Soviet leaders) would be more inclined to favor measures conducive to U.S. goals.

Fourth, we need to consider whether the Communist authorities realized that the CIA was funding secret programs to distribute books to individuals and libraries. If so, how actively did the authorities try to counter the distribution by intercepting packages, confiscating items that had already been delivered, issuing directives to libraries,



and publishing attacks on books that had been smuggled in? To what extent did the book distribution programs become a distraction and a resource burden for the Communist regimes?

Fifth, taking account of these initial four points, we can try to assess the net impact of the book distribution programs on the outcome of the Cold War. Was the impact marginal, or would the standoff have turned out differently in the absence of a sustained U.S. effort to smuggle books into the Communist bloc?

Unlike the many scholars, journalists, and former officials who have published books and articles about RFE and RL without establishing methodologically rigorous criteria and evidence to gauge the radios' efficacy, Alfred Reisch in this volume presents an abundance of evidence that allows us to judge how effective the book distribution programs were in their 35 years of existence. We should not—and, fortunately, thanks to Reisch's exhaustive research, need not—simply take the programs' efficacy as a given. Instead, we must measure the programs' output and achievements according to the criteria laid out here.

One of the numerous virtues of Reisch's work is his meticulous compilation of statistics that give a good sense of the book distribution programs' scale. As noted earlier, the figures he adduces for the number of books transferred to Eastern Europe are incomplete because some archival records have not yet been released. Gaps thus arise in the time series for the FEC/IAC program. Moreover, no verifiable data at all are available about the Bedford Publishing Company program. (The founding head of Bedford Publishing, Isaac Patch, wrote a self-published memoir, but the section of it describing the book distribution program is very brief. Patch cites no bodies of statistics and gives only a few scattered figures regarding how the books were smuggled into the USSR. The memoir offers no guidance or leads for scholars to pursue in corroborating the data.)<sup>13</sup>

Yet, despite these vexing limitations, the statistics provided by Reisch from a variety of sources—particularly the declassified reports produced at frequent intervals by Minden and his predecessor, Samuel Walker, as well as the monthly, quarterly, and annual reports from

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<sup>13</sup> Isaac Patch, *Closing the Circle: A Buckalino Journey around Our Time* (Wellesley, MA: Wellesley College Printing Service, 1996), 255–63.

the network of book publishers and distributors indicating the book titles and number of copies sent to libraries and individuals in each country—leave no doubt that the cumulative number of publications transferred was in the millions. For a 17-year period starting with 1956, Reisch breaks down the figures year by year and country by country, allowing readers to grasp the magnitude of the book distribution over time in the region as a whole and in individual countries. The available records contain less complete data (if any) for later years, but Reisch provides a good sense of how the programs' resources and priorities changed in response to pressures and events.

The second step in gauging the book distribution programs' effectiveness is to determine (a) how many of the intended recipients ended up receiving publications and (b) how many of the people who received books actually read them. This task is inherently more complicated than the gathering of data regarding the number of books distributed. Many of the intended recipients sent acknowledgments of receipt to the distributors, but the huge collections of these acknowledgments either were moved long ago to an unknown repository or, more likely, were discarded or destroyed to conserve space or to protect the identities of the correspondents. Extended excerpts and data from the letters of acknowledgment and from letters requesting books are contained in the various reports that were preserved in the RFE/RL archive, but we cannot know for sure whether the excerpts chosen for these reports are representative of the full collection. Nonetheless, the unavailability of the complete set of materials need not be a fatal obstacle. Even if we still had access to all the original letters sent by book recipients, these letters were, by definition, a self-selected sample. Hence, no precise measurements would have been feasible from them anyway.

Moreover, three aspects of the pool of intended recipients facilitate our task somewhat and allow for considerable roughness of measurement. First, the pool in each country was carefully targeted and was not a random sample of the population. As noted earlier, the FEC's book program was designed to reach political and intellectual elites, libraries, institutes, and social organizations, and from the mid-1960s on it also was geared toward students and most professional groups. These categories were more likely than the average person to acknowledge receiving and reading publications. Second, when the FEC and its

distributors did not hear back from intended recipients for an extended period, they routinely sent follow-up letters asking whether the intended recipients still wanted to receive publications. In many cases these follow-up communications elicited valuable information about the receipt (or non-receipt) of earlier shipments of books, which was duly noted in the monthly and annual reports. Third, even though we cannot precisely measure how many of the people who received publications (or who saw them in libraries) actually read them, a plethora of evidence in Reisch's book confirms that a sizable number of those who acknowledged receiving books or journals (and whose comments were excerpted in the distribution reports) also read at least portions of the publications and in some cases lent them to relatives, friends, students, or colleagues. Hence, even though we have to make do with highly inexact estimates, we can safely infer that a significant proportion of those who received publications did in fact read at least part of them, an act that in some cases entailed considerable personal risk.

The next step in evaluating the book distribution programs' effectiveness is to figure out whether changes occurred in the political views of those in Eastern Europe who read the publications. Were their views altered or at least bolstered—consciously or otherwise—by what they read? Unless the books had this kind of impact on a relatively wide scale, the purpose of distributing them would not be as readily apparent.

To be sure, the books that were most likely to reach the intended recipients were not the ones that were apt to have any effect on readers' political views. Medical reference works, technical and diagnostic manuals, art books and journals, architectural catalogs, film and theater guides, agricultural handbooks, classical literary anthologies, language books and dictionaries, and other items having no overt political content stood a good chance of passing through the gauntlet of censors but did not have much prospect of making readers look more favorably upon the West, apart from some gratitude they might feel toward the person or publishing entity that supplied the book or journal. More than half of the publications transferred to Eastern Europe under the auspices of the FEC and IAC were non-political in nature. Presumably such items were included in the FEC program in part to induce the censors to let their guard down and in part to acclimate the local postal systems to a steady flow of publications of

all types from the West. In addition, the technical books, reference works, diagnostic manuals, and other specialized volumes represented welcome “gifts” for leading scientists and researchers in the various fields, who, after receiving the initial items, would presumably look forward to receiving other publications from the same foreign distributor. Some of these scientists and researchers ordinarily might have been wary of receiving any publications from overseas that dealt with sensitive political questions, but their newfound trust in the distributor might make them more amenable to receiving and even reading “political” books or journals that came from this particular distributor.

Whatever the precise rationale may have been, the inclusion of a large number of non-political books in the FEC program complicates our task somewhat. We need to focus on the subset of books that were most likely to influence readers’ political views—precisely the sorts of books that were also most likely to be intercepted by the censors or to be confiscated from people trying to bring them into the country. The official controls significantly limited the number of political books that entered, but these controls were rarely ironclad. We know from many letters of acknowledgment as well as first-hand testimony (contemporaneous and retrospective) that some books with “hostile” political content did reach eager readers either through the mail or (more often) through person-to-person transfers. By focusing on the impact of these particular books, we can try to determine whether the FEC program helped to change readers’ political views in ways favorable to the United States or at least to reinforce existing pro-Western sentiments.

Reisch’s lengthy chapters containing excerpts of letters from readers in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Bulgaria are a gold mine of empirical evidence. Even though we cannot survey all the readers of FEC-distributed publications to find out what the average experience was like, Reisch’s five chapters allow us to discern in selected cases whether key elites’ views were changed by perusing the books or other items they received. The chapters also allow us to discover instances in which readers who were already inclined to support far-reaching liberalization in their own countries had those sentiments reinforced by what they read. The chapters indicate that even though some readers were critical of the U.S. government during the war in Vietnam and on some other occasions, those external considerations rarely kept them from judging the books on their own

terms. The evidence in Reisch's five chapters can be supplemented with evidence from memoirs, interviews, and archival documents in the former Communist countries. This wealth of evidence does not permit any precise tabulation of the number of readers whose political views were changed or reinforced by the books and other publications, but it does indicate that in a substantial number of cases the program had the type of impact the FEC was seeking.

The fourth step in evaluating the efficacy of the book distribution programs is to gauge whether the Communist regimes viewed these programs as a "threat" that had to be countered even at the expense of considerable resources and manpower. On this matter the evidence in Reisch's book and in the archives of former Communist countries leaves no doubt that the FEC/IAC and Bedford Publishing Company programs were a huge irritant. Both publicly and privately, officials in Moscow and other Warsaw Pact capitals regularly denounced efforts by "malevolent foreign intelligence services" to smuggle in "subversive, anti-Soviet literature and leaflets."<sup>14</sup> The leaders of the Soviet and East European Communist parties were especially worried about the impact of illicit books on young people, notably university students. In December 1976, the head of the Soviet KGB, Yuri Andropov, sent a detailed report to the Politburo of the Soviet Communist Party (CPSU) analyzing a host of "invidious influences from abroad," particularly "newspapers and books from bourgeois countries" that were causing "negative behavior on the part of young people studying at

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<sup>14</sup> "Tsentral'nyi Komitet KPSS," Memorandum No. 1/36 (Top Secret) from P. Shelest, first secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party (UkrCP), to the CPSU Politburo, 21 May 1968, in Tsentral'nyi Derzhavnyi Arkhiv Hromads'kykh Ob'ednan' Ukrainy (TsDAHOU), Fond (F.) 1, Opis' (Op.) 25, Sprava (Spr.) 28, Listy (Ll.) 102-12; "Chlenu Politbyuro TsK KPSS, Pervomu sekretaryu TsK KPU tov. Shelestu P. E.," Memorandum No. 5/3574 (Top Secret) from A. Zhabchenko, chief of directorate of the Ukrainian KGB, to P. E. Shelest, CPSU Politburo member and first secretary of the UkrCP, 25 May 1968, in TsDAHOU, F. 1, Op. 25, Spr. 28, Ll. 152-60; and "TsK KPSS: O nastroyenii sredi dukhovenstva otnositel'no chekhoslovatskikh sobytii," Memorandum No. 311-s (Secret) from Vladimir Kuroedov, chairman of the Soviet government's Council on Religious Affairs, 11 September 1968, in Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Noveishei Istorii (RGANI), F. 5, Op. 60, Delo (D.) 24, Ll. 150, 153-6.

universities.”<sup>15</sup> Concerns about this matter had existed at the KGB since the 1950s, but Andropov and other senior KGB officials feared that the surge of East-West exchanges and human contacts amid the détente of the 1970s were facilitating the entry of Western books, journals, leaflets, and other “propaganda that is the main wellspring of hostile sentiments” among students.<sup>16</sup>

The Communist authorities were so intent on blocking the import of books and other items dealing with sensitive political topics that they devoted enormous resources toward this end. Through a combination of draconian controls of mail from overseas and spot-checks of all people (whether citizens or foreigners) entering the country, they sought to keep out any publications that did not meet with official approval.<sup>17</sup> Censorship procedures and screening systems to exclude foreign publications were costly and socially corrosive, but they remained firmly in place throughout the Warsaw Pact until the late 1980s.

The strenuous efforts made by the Communist governments to prevent the introduction of unwanted publications suggest that even when political books and journals were culled by the censors or confiscated by border control personnel, the book distribution programs achieved at least a modicum of success. Every time an outlawed publication was intercepted, the KGB and its East European counterparts worried that other illicit items were getting through. Hence, they clamped down further and expended an even larger amount of resources to block “unsavory” publications and to ferret out any clandestine supply channel. The fact that the Soviet-bloc regimes felt compelled to

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<sup>15</sup> “Spravka o kharaktere i prichinakh negativnykh proyavlenii sredi uchashcheisya i studencheskoi molodezhi,” Memorandum No. 1384-ss (Top Secret), from KGB Chairman Yu. V. Andropov to the CPSU Politburo, 11 December 1976, with attached report from F. D. Bobkov, in RGANI, F. 81, Op. 1, D. 73, Ll. 45–9.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Even as late as August 1986, when I (a very young researcher) was taking a train from Helsinki to Leningrad, the Soviet border control guards dismantled my entire compartment and carefully checked my luggage to see whether I was trying to smuggle in illicit books. They were particularly concerned that I might be trying to bring in Bibles, something that caused me to smile in amusement when they told me. (They did not share my amusement.)

maintain such an elaborate and costly system of controls attests to the “threat” they perceived from the book distribution programs.

The final step in evaluating the efficacy of the book distribution programs is to determine whether the effects they had on the Soviet and East European regimes and societies contributed to the end of the Cold War. The answer to this question depends partly on the answer to a prior question: how can we best explain the end of the Cold War? This topic has sparked extensive debate among scholars, and no firm consensus has yet emerged. Some analysts have argued that ideas played a crucial role in spawning the changes and events that led to the end of the Cold War, whereas others, invoking the realist tradition, have given much greater weight to material conditions.<sup>18</sup> Judgments about the relative importance of ideational and material factors in the momentous events of 1989–1991 are bound to affect one’s appraisal of the role of the book distribution programs. Few if any scholars are likely to argue either that the book distribution programs were absolutely decisive in ending the Cold War or that they were completely irrelevant. But where

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<sup>18</sup> On this theoretical debate and the substantive issues involved, see Mark Kramer, “Ideology and the Cold War,” *Review of International Studies* 25, No. 4 (October 1999): 339–79; and Mark Kramer, “Realism, Ideology, and the End of the Cold War,” *Review of International Studies* 27, no. 1 (January 2001): 119–31. For a range of views on the role of ideas (and a realist reply from William Wohlforth), see the special issue on “Ideas, International Relations, and the End of the Cold War,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 7, No. 2 (Spring 2005). For other useful compendia of essays on the end of the Cold War, see Richard K. Herrmann and Richard Ned Lebow (eds.), *Ending the Cold War: Interpretations, Causation, and the Study of International Relations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Silvio Pons and Federico Romero (eds.), *Reinterpreting the End of the Cold War: Issues, Interpretations, Periodizations* (London: Frank Cass, 2006); Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, Vol. 3: *Endings* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Richard Ned Lebow and Thomas Risse-Kappen (eds.), *International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995); V. M. Zubok, S. Yu. Shenin, and A. A. Shubin (eds.), *Konets kholodnoi voyny: Novye fakty i aspekty* (Saratov: Nauchnaya kniga, 2004); Michael J. Hogan (ed.), *The End of the Cold War: Its Meaning and Implications* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992); and Pierre Allan and Kjell Goldmann (eds.), *The End of the Cold War: Evaluating Theories of International Relations* (Boston: Kluwer Law International, 1995).



one comes down on the continuum between these two extreme positions is likely to be determined in part by how one views the underlying dynamics of change in international and domestic politics.

Scholars espousing the ideational position might argue that the book distribution programs contributed to the outcome of the Cold War in two ways: first, by bolstering the view among some East European elites and young people that the Soviet-backed Communist regimes were fundamentally illegitimate; and second, by helping to spread democratic values within the USSR (as well as Eastern Europe) that ultimately facilitated Mikhail Gorbachev's decisions to embark on a drastic reorientation of Soviet domestic and foreign policies. Realists, for their part, might argue that the main contribution was in posing a challenge to the East-bloc regimes and thereby forcing them to devote scarce resources and manpower to screening and surveillance systems that they hoped would counter the perceived threat. Still other scholars might aver that the book distribution programs were important in all of these ways—or in none.

Similarly, analysts who believe that revolutionary upheavals within a society occur mainly through mass mobilization ("change from below") might contend that the book distribution programs were much less important than RFE and RL broadcasts in helping to fuel popular unrest in the Soviet bloc that culminated in the velvet revolutions of 1989 and the surge of instability within the Soviet Union. By contrast, scholars who believe that revolutionary change in most cases occurs primarily because of growing disillusionment among privileged elites and a loss of will at the top (which may or may not be spurred by mass mobilization) might argue that the book distribution programs played an even larger role than RFE and RL in reinforcing elite self-doubts in the USSR and contributing, at least indirectly, to Gorbachev's reluctance to use large-scale force and his diffident and vacillating responses to the mounting challenges he faced at home.<sup>19</sup> Scholars who accept

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<sup>19</sup> On the importance of elite self-doubts and the loss of will at the top in the USSR, see Mark Kramer, "The Collapse of East European Communism and the Repercussions within the Soviet Union (Part 2)," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6, No. 4 (Fall 2004): 3–65; and Mark Kramer, "The Reform of the Soviet System and the Demise of the Soviet State," *Slavic Review* 63, No. 3 (Fall 2004): 505–13.



Jack Goldstone's generic definition of revolution—"an effort to transform the political institutions and the justifications for political authority in a society, accompanied by formal or informal mass mobilization and non-institutionalized actions that undermine existing authorities"—might aver that the book distribution programs were important in contributing to a growing sense both at the top and at the grassroots level that extant political institutions in the Soviet Union and East-Central Europe were no longer acceptable and would have to be replaced in toto.<sup>20</sup>

Whatever positions one might take in these various academic debates, the main point to emphasize here is that an evaluation of the role of the book distribution programs in the outcome of the Cold War is more complicated than one might initially assume. Any final judgment about the matter depends not only on how one views the magnitude of the programs' impact on the East-bloc regimes and societies, but also on how one conceives of the dynamics of drastic change in international and domestic politics.

Because the book distribution programs until very recently were unknown in the West, the only evaluations of their efficacy undertaken during the Cold War were by the CIA. In a highly classified March 1970 report, the agency claimed that "the book programs are, for the most part, demonstrably effective in reaching directly significant segments of the professional and technical elite, and through them their colleagues in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, with material that can inferentially be said to influence attitudes and reinforce predispositions toward intellectual and cultural freedom, and dissatisfaction with its absence."<sup>21</sup> The CIA authors cited no evidence to back up this characterization of being "demonstrably effective," and their use of the word "inferentially" in describing the impact of the publications on

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<sup>20</sup> Jack A. Goldstone, "Toward a Fourth Generation of Revolutionary Theory," *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 4 (Palo Alto, CA: Annual Reviews, 2001): 142.

<sup>21</sup> CIA, "Tensions in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe: Challenge and Opportunity," Paper prepared for CIA Director Richard Helms (Secret), n.d. (March 1970), passed on to President Richard Nixon by National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger on 6 April 1970, transcribed in sanitized form in *FRUS*, 1969–1976, Vol. XII, 463.

the recipients' "attitudes" and "predispositions toward intellectual and cultural freedom" suggests that the agency did not really have solid evidence about what the impact was. One assumes that the CIA had received enough positive feedback through various channels (including Minden's reports) to reach this judgment, but the agency's inability at the time to gain direct access to the large majority of "the professional and technical elite" in Eastern Europe and the USSR necessarily qualifies the judgment offered.

Even in the post-Cold War era, historians and political scientists studying the Cold War did not know enough about the book distribution programs to weigh their impact on the Cold War. The only assessment of this matter offered up to now has been by John Matthews in his 2003 article. Referring to the FEC's transfers of books to Eastern Europe in the late 1950s and after, he argues that "this massive 'Marshall Plan' for the mind must have had a significant influence on professional people in the Soviet orbit ... Intellectuals in the East understood intellectuals in the West because they had been reading the same books." Matthews concludes, on this basis, that "the CIA-funded [book] mailing project played no small role" in overcoming "the chasm between East and West" and in bringing a peaceful end to the Cold War.<sup>22</sup>

The problem, however, is that Matthews does not present sufficient evidence to back up these assertions. Focusing mostly on the years 1956 to 1959, he cites a few examples of readers' favorable responses to non-political books (medical reference books, art catalogs, architectural guides, etc.), but he provides no evidence that even a single FEC-supplied book altered (or at least reinforced) the political views of the recipient. Matthews's article contains some interesting and valuable nuggets of information about the early years of the FEC program, but it does not contain the evidence we would need to assess the validity of his claims about the importance of the book distribution programs in the end of the Cold War.

Alfred Reisch's conclusions about the effectiveness of the book distribution programs are similar to those of Matthews, but Reisch, unlike Matthews, marshals a vast amount of declassified evidence relating to the impact of the book distribution programs on recipients'

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<sup>22</sup> Matthews, "The West's Secret Marshall Plan for the Mind," 426–7.

political outlooks. He contends that the covert book distribution efforts “had a significant impact and influence on intellectuals and professional people and thousands of students and youths in East Europe during some four decades of Soviet communist domination,” and that, as a result, the “book mailing and distribution programs, covering a period of over three decades, played a decisive role” in “the West’s ideological victory” in the Cold War. Even though some readers might disagree with one or both of these judgments, they can be grateful to Reisch for the immense amount of research and careful thought he has done. The appearance of his landmark study ensures that the book distribution programs will no longer be left out of the history of the Cold War. Not only does his account open up a host of fruitful opportunities for further research, it also guarantees that scholars henceforth will keep in mind the impact of this crucial U.S. political warfare activity.

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# Foreword

My original intent when planning this book was to write up the entire story of the West's secret Cold War book distribution project, a period of 35 years, from July 1956 until the end of September 1991. For reasons beyond my control, I was able to locate and access only the first 17 years of the complete archival documents covering the project. Financed throughout by the CIA, fourteen of these years (1956 to 1970) were run under the aegis of the Free Europe Committee in New York, and the remaining 21 years up to 1991 under the cover of an already existing fictitious organization, the International Advisory Council, Inc., later renamed International Literary Centre, Ltd., whose complete files have yet to be released by the CIA.<sup>1</sup> Unlike the story of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, told in several books and even more articles, the secret book distribution project run by and from the United States, with the participation and assistance of most

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<sup>1</sup> When the book project was terminated in September 1991, its manager George C. Minden reportedly destroyed the records held in his New York office. However, throughout the years he regularly sent his detailed reports to the CIA in Washington, D.C. This author requested access to the 1973–1991 records by submitting to the CIA, under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), five Mandatory Declassification Requests (MDRs). Following a series of denials, he then appealed to the Interagency Security Classification Appeals Panel (ISCAP) in Washington, D.C., which on June 10, 2011, overturned the CIA's previous decision. The author then resubmitted all his MDRs to the CIA, only to be told that the requested records could not be located and that they may be with the Department of State.

West European countries, allied and neutral, has to this day remained an untold story.<sup>2</sup>

Between 1960 and 1974, while studying at Columbia University for a Ph.D. in Political Science, and then teaching part-time at Manhattan College in New York, I was personally involved in the book distribution program in New York, first as an information analyst, then as a national editor and plans advisor for Hungary. This involvement, however, would not be sufficient to tell in a scholarly and credible manner the full story of this amazingly effective and successful book project targeting five communist-ruled East European countries: Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria, as well as, until 1970, the three Baltic countries—the Soviet Republics from 1957—and then Soviet Union, from the mid-1970s onwards until the end of the Cold War.

Thanks to the personal files of the late John P. C. Matthews, the Sam S. Walker, Jr. and George C. Minden Collections, as well as the Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Corporate Records deposited with the archives of the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, it became possible to study in depth the objectives, implementation, and impact of this remarkable covert Cold War project. Additional materials relevant to the book project were found in the U.S. National Archives at College Park, MD, the U.S. Library of Congress, the National Security Archives of George Washington University, and the Library

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<sup>2</sup> The first mention of the book program, basically covering the years 1956 to 1959, was by John P. C. Matthews in his article “The West’s Secret Marshall Plan for the Mind” from 2003. A Czech translation of Matthews’ article appeared in *Ustav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR* (Vol. XIV, No. IV (2007): n.p., Institute of Contemporary History, Prague). A Hungarian translation appeared in two parts in *Magyar Szemle* (Budapest, December 2007 and January 2008). See also Papp, “New York-Budapest Könyvküldő Szolgálat”; Reisch, “Ideological Warfare During the Cold War: The West’s Secret Book Distribution Program Behind the Iron Curtain”; and Schwartz et al., *Barriers to the Broad Dissemination of Creative Work in the Arab World*. The book project has also been mentioned very briefly in a few U.S. Government documents, and in interviews given in Czech by Zdeněk Mastník, a Czech book distributor in London, and by Peter Straka, an Austrian book distributor in Vienna.

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of Georgetown University in Washington. Detailed monthly, semi-annual, and annual reports, complete lists of book titles sent to each target country, excerpts from the tens of thousands of acknowledgment and request letters sent by book recipients, and regular monthly reports from the various book distribution centers in Western Europe in the U.S. about what publications they gave out to whom, all provide authentic written historical evidence. Equally valuable are the numerous RFE/RL official memoranda, most of them classified at the time, outlining the short- and the long-term objectives and the targets of the book program, and analyzing and evaluating its progress and effectiveness. Even though most of the people who were involved in the early years of Free Europe have passed away, I was able to meet and talk to a fair number of individuals still alive today in the U.S. and in Europe, who were directly or indirectly involved in the book program and willingly agreed to share their knowledge and personal experiences with me.





## CHAPTER 1

# Origins, Objectives, and Launching of the Book Project under Sam Walker, Jr.

On the basis of the documents found at the Hoover Institution Archives, it can be ascertained that the idea of creating Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty and of using radio to penetrate the Iron Curtain with news from the West first grew out of discussions held in 1948 between former Ambassador to Moscow George F. Kennan, then director of the State Department Policy Planning Staff, and other government officials.<sup>1</sup> Among them was Frank Wisner, who served with the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in Europe during the war. In 1948, he became director of the Office of Special Projects, soon to be renamed Office of Policy Coordination (OPC), the future espionage and counter-intelligence branch of the Central Intelligence Agency.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kennan's Policy Planning Staff Memorandum, May 4, 1948, Document 269, in "Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment," Department of State: [http://www.state.gov/about\\_state/history/intel/index](http://www.state.gov/about_state/history/intel/index). The use of cover organizations was in line with National Security Council directive NSC-4(a), which instructed the director of the CIA to "initiate and conduct covert psychological operations to counteract Soviet and Soviet-inspired activities which constitute a threat to peace." Accordingly, surrogate radio stations not officially connected with the U.S. Government were created to broadcast programs to Soviet satellite countries and to take positions for which the United States officially denied responsibility. For a photocopy of NSC-4, see Warner (ed.), *CIA Cold War Records: The CIA Under Harry Truman*, 175-7.

<sup>2</sup> Frank W. Wisner (1910-1965), responsible for covert operations abroad, was concerned about the spread of communism and lobbied hard for a new intelligence agency with the support of Kennan and Defense Secretary James Forrestal. He served under CIA directors Allen W. Dulles and Richard

With the covert financial assistance of the CIA, deemed essential to ensure a fast start, the National Committee for Free Europe (NCFE) was incorporated in May 1949 in Albany, NY, and underwent another name change until the final designation of Free Europe Committee (FEC), Inc. was adopted in March 1954.<sup>3</sup>

This book is not the story of Radio Free Europe, but of one of its many other “special projects.” These included a Division of Intellectual Cooperation set up as early as 1950, a West European Branch Office in Paris under Eugene L. Metz, and a West European Operations Division in London headed by Mucio L. Delgado. The Free Europe University in Exile established in Strasbourg, later moved to Paris, was given generous financial support in the form of yearly scholarships and the organization of seminars. In 1952 and in subsequent years, the Free Europe Committee (FEC) also gave financial support to the Polish émigré periodical *Kultura*, the Polish Library in Paris, the Hungarian publication *Amerikai Népszava*, the General Sikorski Historical Institute in London, and various recipients in West Germany. Columbia University also received funds to set up a program of East European Studies. The Free Europe Press Division prepared the monthly publication *News from Behind the Iron Curtain*, followed later by a German and a French edition.

An executive memorandum from 1951 to the NCFE Board of Directors from FEC President C. D. Jackson called for the setting up of four operating divisions—American Promotion, Educational Relations, Political Relations, and European Propaganda. The latter division was “charged with the responsibility and authority to carry out all European propaganda operations by radio, publication, or other means.” Another 17-point memo on the functions of the Educational Relations Division included such tasks as “To provide a complete set of acceptable textbooks for primary and secondary schools of all Satellite countries revised and supplemented for immediate post-liber-

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Helms, suffered a mental breakdown after the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, retired from the CIA in 1962, and killed himself three years later. See also <http://www.Spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/JFKwisner.htm>, 1–10.

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed account of the creation of FEC and RFE/RL, see Johnson, *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty: The CIA Years and Beyond*, especially chapters 1 and 2, 7–78.

ation use.” The division was also tasked “To keep currently informed of Soviet cultural propaganda efforts [...] here and in Europe and to help provide counter-propaganda publications as required.”<sup>4</sup>

A subsequent memorandum called for the establishment of a “Special Projects” or “Publication Section,” later named Free Europe Publication Division under the direction of FEC Vice-President Samuel S. Walker, Jr., with a two-fold purpose: “To reach over an ever larger portion of the population of the satellite countries” and “To contribute towards the fight against Communism in the countries of Free Europe.”<sup>5</sup> It was felt that sufficient material was available to implement the two projects immediately, with a recommendation to use “only the most reliable material.” For the first time, the use of printed matter rather than the spoken word was considered through the use of a monthly letter-size magazine in 250,000 copies, 3,000 words each, carried in plastic balloons to Czechoslovakia, and the mailing of 10,000 letters a month to individual addresses to be picked at random (every tenth name of each letter of the alphabet) from the telephone or population directories in Hungary and Poland. The letters would feature stories and articles depicting life in the satellite countries, and were produced from RFE broadcasts covering the fields of labor, farming, economics, women’s affairs, education, as well as human interest and humorous stories. Names and addresses were to be picked, and envelopes addressed, stamped, and sealed in Munich. Moreover, the type of envelope, typewriter, and handwritings should be varied, and fake return addresses were to be used. Letters should be mailed locally by RFE employees where possible, or by freelance collaborators from the major cities of Europe such as Vienna, Paris, Stockholm, Berlin, Rome, Trieste, and Istanbul. The project was to be

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<sup>4</sup> Memorandum to the Executive Committee and the FEC Board of Directors on the National Committee for a Free Europe (NCFE) Operating Organization, October 17, 1951. On August 4, 1949, the FEC Board of Directors had already approved the establishment of a Committee on Intellectual Activity, and on April 3, 1950, that of a Mid-European Studies Center. Hoover Institution Archives (hereafter HIA), RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 2322.

<sup>5</sup> Memorandum dated November 1, 1951, with a detailed estimate of the contents and costs involved. The launching of balloons to Poland and Hungary, as well as to Bulgaria from Greece or Turkey, was also mentioned. *Ibid.*

closely coordinated with the Public Relations Office in Munich and the Crusade for Freedom in New York.

Three balloon launching sites were selected in West Germany, and printed materials in the Czech, Slovak, Hungarian, and Polish language meant for the largely anti-Communist population were dropped in this coordinated unorthodox manner behind the Iron Curtain in Czechoslovakia (Operation Prospero in 1953, Operation Veto in 1954), Hungary (Operation Focus in 1954–1955), and Poland (Operation Spotlight in 1955).<sup>6</sup> Czech military aircraft were sent to shoot down the balloons and citizens ordered to turn in all leaflets found. When these operations were stopped, over 50 million leaflets had been sent to Czechoslovakia, over 16 million to Hungary, and over 260,000 to Poland in 1955. The balloon-leaflet program elicited many communist media attacks and strong protests from the East European communist governments involved as well as from the Soviet Union, requesting the West German and U.S. governments to discontinue the operation. In October 1954, the Hungarian government sent a note to the U.S. government violently protesting the balloon leaflet operation in Hungary. The State Department rejected the complaint, as it saw no basis for concern, thus implicitly giving its approval to the FEP balloon leaflet operation. Later on, however, following the debatable results of the balloon mailings and the bloody crushing of the October 1956 Revolution in Hungary, the balloon operations were suspended in November 1956. The balloon program was ended at the insistence of the West German government, which objected to the medium, not the message, but was supportive of the book program. The launching sites were de-activated in March–April 1957, and the operation completely suspended in August 1957. Even though the balloon mailings were not as effective as initially conceived, they proved the value of combining

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<sup>6</sup> The primary purpose of Operation Focus was “to focus the attention of the Hungarian people upon certain means by which they can continue to battle, thwart, and wrench concessions from the regime.” Hungarian Guidance No. 15 from Louis Galantiere to Focus Task Force and Hungarian Desk Staff, RFE, September 16, 1954. Ibid. See also Sam Walker’s draft paper to C.D. Jackson on political warfare behind the Iron Curtain dated June 10, 1955, 1–12. HIA, Sam Walker Collection, Box 2.

the spoken word of radio broadcasts with the written word for effective propaganda aimed at combating communist indoctrination.<sup>7</sup>

In his pioneering article, John Matthews deservedly gives considerable credit to Samuel (Sam) Sloan Walker Jr. for coming up with the idea of a “Mailing project” of selected literature targeting communist elite members or regime-friendly individuals behind the Iron Curtain. Born in 1926 in a well-to-do New York business family, Walker served with the American Field Service in France during the war. He enrolled at Yale, where he had a distinguished record as Phi Beta Kappa student and chairman of the *Yale Daily News*, the oldest student-managed daily newspaper in the U.S. After graduating in the class of 1948—also the class of George H. W. Bush—Walker joined the staff of *Time-Life* magazines in New York City. In 1950, he became a senior executive of the National Committee for a Free Europe, and in 1951 Vice-President of the Free Europe Committee. As director of FEC’s Research and Publication Service, he oversaw publications projects such as the magazine *News from Behind the Iron Curtain*, later renamed *East Europe Magazine*. As a former FEC official described him, “Sam was a great activist, always working to build communications with Eastern Europe. When one approach became difficult he was always in search of another.”<sup>8</sup>

In 1952, Walker conceived the idea of delivering leaflets by helium-filled balloons targeting three East European countries, and sending leaflets by surface mail. The balloon operation lasted from 1953 to 1957, when it was discontinued. Even before it was over, the always active and highly inventive Walker initiated another printed-

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<sup>7</sup> For a detailed study, see Cummings, “Balloons Over East Europe: The Cold War Leaflet Campaign of Radio Free Europe.” See also S. S. Walker Jr., “Free Europe Press Editorial Program,” February 26, 1957, 4–7, HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 2322; Johnson, *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, 58–62, 72–3; and Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 86. See also Fulton Lewis Jr., “Lewis Deflates Balloon Program,” a critical op-ed written after the termination of the program, *Lakeview Ledger*, November 17, 1957.

<sup>8</sup> Paul B. Henze to the author, August 9, 2010. Paul B. Henze (1924–2011) served with RFE in Munich from 1952–58, after which he served for 30 years in a variety of U.S. Government organizations, including the CIA and the National Security Council (1977–1980) under President Jimmy Carter as assistant to Zbigniew Brzezinski.

word project in April 1956, a covert book mailing program behind the Iron Curtain, which lasted until 1991 under the directorship of George C. Minden. In 1958–1959, as director of the East Europe Institute, another spin-off of FEC, Walker and his deputy John Kirk managed the first person-to-person distribution project of American and Western books to Polish visitors to West Europe. Walker resigned from FEC in March 1959, but still coordinated FEC activities at the July 1959 World Youth Festival in Vienna, where thousands of books and periodicals were distributed to Polish and other East European participants. Walker then founded a family-owned publishing company in New York, Walker and Company, while remaining in contact with RFE and RL. He died in a kayaking accident in 1992.<sup>9</sup>

In his vivid account of the launching of the book project and the link between the FEC and the CIA, John Matthews describes Walker and his FEP staff as “somewhat younger than their radio counterparts [...] and taken as a group, not only young, but definitely left of center politically. This latter trait made for good rapport with their overseers in the Central Intelligence Agency—Cord Meyer and Emmons Brown—whom Walker and company, to shield their identity, referred to as ‘our friends down south.’ Only a handful of people of the Free Europe Committee and the leadership of RFE and FEP knew that the general direction and funding came from the Central Intelligence Agency, not the private funds noisily raised by the Crusade for Freedom. Most of the money was funneled through dummy, and pos-

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<sup>9</sup> The President [FEC] to the Executive Committee, C.D. Jackson, and others, April 8, 1959. HIA, Sam Walker Collection, Box 1; exchange of letters with Mrs. Beth Walker; February 12, 2011 interview with his FEC assistant director (1951–1955), Dr. Richard M. Hunt, long-time Marshall of Harvard University; and Sam S. Walker’s obituary in *The New York Times*, June 11, 1992. A well-educated man very committed to his work, Walker loved history and science writing, and was himself a superior journalist and author. When in 2005 Walker and Company became a division of Bloomsbury Publishing Company, it was one of the few remaining independent publishers in the U.S. Most of the documents in the Samuel S. Walker Collection in the Hoover Institution Archives pertain mainly to the activities of the East Europe Institute and the book distribution at the 1959 Vienna Youth Festival.

sibly a few legitimate organizations.”<sup>10</sup> Once the decision to go ahead with the mailing project was taken, Walker met with Imre Kovács and Robert Gábor to discuss how to implement the project; the more so because Hugh Seton-Watson, who knew about it, had said it would never work. Afterwards, they met with FEC vice president Adolphe Berle, and asked him to write a piece on democracy, which was later translated into Hungarian and mailed to Hungary.<sup>11</sup>

Upon Sam Walker’s retirement, FEC President Archibald S. Alexander appointed Robert W. Minton as acting director of Free Europe Press. His tenure lasted just two years. Born in New York and a 1940 graduate from Princeton University, Minton had worked for the U.S. State Department as a spokesman for the Marshall Plan. In 1946, he earned a Masters in Public Relations at Columbia University, and in

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<sup>10</sup> Matthews, “The West’s Secret Marshall Plan for the Mind,” 410–11. John Potter Cuyler Matthews (1929–2010) spent ten years with RFE in Munich, Germany, where he became head of FEC’s European operations. After 1959, he became Program Director of the Foreign Policy Association’s World Affairs Center in New York. In 1968, he helped found the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) and headed its East European operations until 1981. See also John P. C. Matthews’ obituary in *Town Topics* (Princeton), February 3, 2010. Cord Meyer, Jr. (1920–2001), a Yale graduate, joined the CIA in 1951 under OPC director Frank Wisner, and was the main operative of “Operation Mockingbird” (against Senator Joseph McCarthy). As head of the International Organizations Division of the CIA’s Directorate of Plans from 1954 to 1962, and of CIA’s Covert Action Staff (CAS) until 1967, Meyer was the link between the Agency and FEC and RFE/RL. He retired in 1977 after serving 26 years with the CIA. Emmons Brown was Cord Meyer’s deputy, whom Walker referred to as “Brownie” or the “man in the brown suit.” (There is a reference to Emmons Brown and Cord Meyer in a 1956 State Department meeting in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955–1957* Vol. XXV, Eastern Europe, Document 185, 436, online at <http://www.history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v25/d185>. Obituary of Cord Meyer, Jr. in *The New York Times*, May 16, 2001. Other Americans involved were Ed Stillman and Robert Bass. On the CIA and the Radios, see Meyer, *From World Federation to the CIA*, Chapter 5, 110ff. Obituary of Cord Meyer, Jr. in *The New York Times*, May 16, 2001.

<sup>11</sup> John P. C. Matthews’ unpublished interview with Robert Gábor, November 20, 2001, 1–3, and the author’s meetings with Gábor in Washington D.C. and in Budapest. On Kovács and Gábor, see Chapter 4.



1958 joined FEC as public relations director. He resigned in 1964 and continued to work as an author.<sup>12</sup>

To sum up the story of the origins of the Cold War covert book project, the idea came to a lot of people at the same time, with the CIA in on the project from the beginning. As a matter of fact, in the early 1950s there had already been some CIA mailings through Hungarians in Europe to communist party people, as well as some personal mailings to Eastern Europe by émigrés in the West. The power of the book and the potential of Sam Walker's, and later George Minden's concept of ideological warfare was recognized and strongly supported from the start by the U.S. Government. In 1961, the Chief of the CIA's Covert Action Staff responsible for the covert propaganda program wrote in a report to the U.S. Senate on intelligence activities: "Books differ from all propaganda media, primarily because one single book can significantly change the reader's attitude and action to an extent unmatched by the impact of any single medium. [...] This is, of course, not true of all books at all times and with all readers—but it is true significantly enough to make books the most important weapon of strategic (long-range) propaganda."<sup>13</sup>

Contrary to the opinion of those like Hugh Trevor-Roper, who felt that communist censorship would render the project impossible, Walker and his American and East European colleagues believed massive mailings would be more than the censors could handle. The mailing of letters and parcels by East European exiles to relatives and friends back home, despite the communist censors and customs, had become common practice by the mid-1950s. In the same vein, an unsigned, seven-page USIA "action plan" from 1954 indicates that the idea of disseminating printed material in an organized manner was not so novel. The plan outlined additional ways of reaching the Soviet people and of rendering existing means more effective through

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<sup>12</sup> Robert W. Minton passed away in 2000 at age 81 in Concord. Obituary in *The Boston Globe*, March 12, 2000.

<sup>13</sup> Foreign and Military Intelligence, Book I, "Final Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities. United States Senate Together with Additional, Supplemental, and Separate Views," 193, April 26 (legislative day, April 14), 1976 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976).

a Russian-language magazine, gifts of classical American books, the circulation of American motion pictures, and the distribution of printed materials to Soviet sailors in foreign ports and to Soviet soldiers in Austria. In this context, the Sears Robuck catalogues were being judged preferable to Russian-language leaflets, the exchange of persons, and distribution in third countries.<sup>14</sup>

Once Walker convinced the FEC Board of Directors of the viability of the mailing project, FEP was given the green light as well as the funds needed to enhance the scope of the West's (the U.S. and Western Europe) psychological warfare against communist ideology and propaganda, and to carry it into the captive nations of East Europe. With the fiscal year running from June to June, the money allotted in June 1956 assumed the balloon action would go on at least through June 1957. When it was stopped, there was extra money left thanks to which the book project, with Washington's approval, was allowed to grow very fast. Alongside the already very effective radio broadcasts, the printed word and the dissemination of Western political ideals and culture were to be used, and in July 1956, the mailing project was launched from New York and Munich when censorship was relaxed in Poland. According to a confidential office memo, "All materials must appear under 'sponsorship' of a cover organization. There should be no total attacks on communism. Mailings should favor 'revisionist' trends among the new elites. Practical alternatives to doctrinaire Marxist principles should receive high priority. Cross reporting (i.e., reports on what was going on in the other East European countries) should be used to demonstrate what might be possible in their country. Negative developments to weaken confidence in the *bona fide* of their government may be used. [...] Our primary aims should be to demonstrate the superior achievements of the West."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> USIA Action Plan "Curtain (USSR)" dated December 11, 1954, 1-7, declassified with deletions, EO-1999-00102, National Archives, College Park, MD. Some of the same means would later be used by the FEP/IAC/ILC book distribution project.

<sup>15</sup> "Confidential Mailing Plan" by the FEP's Plans and Analysis Department, September 6, 1956. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 191. The use of cover organizations for the book mailing project was in line with National Security Council directive NSC-4 (see fn. 1).

Another FEC memorandum dated October 16, 1956, started by stating that "The possibilities for overthrowing the communist regimes either through 'liberalization' from without or by revolution from within are becoming increasingly remote and the alternative path to freedom in the satellite countries seems to be along a line of transformation of the communist system by an evolutionary process." The memo further suggested that because frontal attacks on communism and communist practices antagonized those in power within the regimes, western propaganda had to find an "area of discussion which could be viewed sympathetically by both the great mass of the population and by communists and servants of the regimes." Subsequently, western propaganda should identify and appeal to bureaucrats, administrators, and managers to encourage them to "phrase their resistance to the regime in terms of the stated goals of the regime rather than opposition to the regime." To achieve this objective, research of various kinds was needed to identify the points of strength or decision-making in the bureaucratic structure, as well as the tensions and pressure points between loyal party officials and the local councils.<sup>16</sup>

In an earlier note speculating about the future, Walker concluded that "liberation through a favorable confluence of events" was highly unlikely in the period 1955–1958. But "ultimate liberation and the eventual restoration of freedom to Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary—although unpredictable—remains a premise in our program." He looked ahead to a "relatively lengthy interim program" with five basic objectives: to prevent absorption and preserve essential nationhood; to reduce reliability by reinforcing links with the West; to decrease economic contribution by increasing consumer goods; to destroy isolation and apathy, stimulate ideas and thinking, and maintain people as an active political factor; and to prevent false hopes and illusions. "These five functions," Walker wrote, "provide the fundamental justification for our existence. They are functions of political communications system—operating through both spoken and printed word." For Walker, FEC's action program had to change following internal events in East Europe, with two goals in mind: "To induce

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<sup>16</sup> Unsigned eight-page RFE memorandum entitled "Proposal for a Research Program to Support Broadcasts to Bureaucrats," October 16, 1956. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 191, Folder 6.

people to do what will help themselves and hurt the regime, and how to work together in the process.”<sup>17</sup>

The start of the new project was cautious and slow. Five months after launching it, Walker told the FEC Board of Directors: “This is a rifle rather than an shotgun approach and is aimed at managers, intellectuals, and various other elites in the target countries, without any attribution to FEC. To date 83 different Western titles have been mailed. They cover cultural, economic, scientific, and a few political topics. One-third of them have been books, including Adolph Berle’s *Capitalist Revolution* and articles from learned journals, quarterlies, etc. Most often, they are sent in the original language, usually English or French, although some of the shorter pieces have been translated. There have been some responses directed to the overt mailers (European publishing houses, etc.) and thus evidence that some of them get through.”<sup>18</sup>

George Minden, still Romanian FEP Desk Chief, wrote in an earlier office memo that “the *very raison d’être* of Free Europe Press is an editorial product [...] and some long-range editorial program should be kept in mind for some future major mailing operations.” He suggested giving some thought to “a limited number of translations of the best recent books published in the Free World” and “the issuing of some sort of magazine digest, the aim of which should be full and objective information for the people behind the Iron Curtain.” He noted that recent events had shown that the countries differed greatly in behavior and that his suggestion was limited to Romania with “a long-range informative and educational plan with very few political overtones.” This brief memo already contained the basic tenets of his later approach to the book distribution program.<sup>19</sup>

With regard to the post-revolution situation in Hungary, a four-page FEC memo called, among other things, for an audience analysis of reaction to RFE broadcasts, FEP leaflets, and other mailing

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<sup>17</sup> “Some Notes for Further Development,” undated memo probably drafted by Walker. HIA, Sam Walker Collection, Box 2.

<sup>18</sup> Minutes of the FEC Board of Directors Executive Committee, New York, November 27, 1956, 4. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 2320.

<sup>19</sup> Memorandum from George C. Minden to S. S. Walker, Jr., November 7, 1956, courtesy of Mrs. Marilyn Minden.

materials, as well as to Hungarian exile leaders and activities in the West and other information likely to be useful in future FEC operations. FEC should take no action that was considered likely to provoke further bloodshed, RFE/Hungary should refrain from tactical advice of any kind, and no balloons should be flown into Hungary until further notice. The memo also stated: "No mailing operations are now conducted into Hungary. The feasibility of desirability of FEP printed material into Hungary at this time should be studied. If it should be determined feasible to mail or send in materials other than by balloons, sponsor would appreciate the opportunity of discussing it with FEC prior to resuming operations, to be certain that it is in keeping with currently approved policies." In the case of Poland, considered to be a "crucial country," the "thaw" and "liberalization" trends were seen as "proceeding about as far and as fast as possible under the circumstances, requiring careful handling by FEC, with lighter proportion of political materials, and more Western materials of use to the administrative and managerial sectors in the solution of the concrete problems they face." FEP should continue and increase its mailing operations to Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania, "directed to the 'elites' who may be expected to be in the foreground of forces working toward democratization and against Soviet controls."<sup>20</sup>

Another FEC Policy Paper restated that the crucial country for the book program was Poland, not Hungary, and recommended the continuation of appropriate mailing projects to Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Bulgaria "with a lighter proportion of political material than is recommended for Poland." Planned mailing projects should supply "Western materials of use to the administrative and managerial sectors in the solution of the concrete tasks they face."<sup>21</sup> A year later, an FEC Policy Paper on target priorities dated January 11, 1958, described the

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<sup>20</sup> Interim Guidance for FEC, November 20, 1956. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records. Following the 1956 Polish October and the return to power of Władysław Gomułka, Poland decided to stop jamming RFE and other foreign broadcasts.

<sup>21</sup> FEC Policy Paper, January 11, 1957, 1–6. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 191, Folder 6. One year later, an FEC Policy Group Paper on target priorities was established.

aim of the book program as follows: "To ensure the delivery by normal postal means of political, economic, cultural, and other printed material to the controlling apparatus of all the captive nations is a major purpose of the Committee."<sup>22</sup>

In a letter and a comprehensive 20-page editorial program sent in February 1957 to FEC President General W. Crittenberger, Walker recommended the indefinite de-activation of all balloon launching sites, the acceleration of the "efforts to influence the 'controlling apparatus' in Eastern Europe by mail and other means of contact," and the initiation of "a program of publications for 'uncommitted areas' designed to identify local self-interest in national independence with the absence of independence in the Soviet Satellites." Walker was convinced that the printed word was a vital and effective instrument of FEC policy. In what he called the "third phase" of FEP's organizational history since 1951, the key to the future of Eastern Europe was the USSR, and as such FEC's mission should be "to make it more painful for the Soviet Union to be where it does not belong." Rather than reaching the people of Eastern Europe *en masse*, it was more important to reach the leadership groups or "controlling apparatus" on which the Soviets relied. If these groups became "infected with the contagion of change," similar groups would be affected in the same manner in the USSR, making the penalty for oppressing Eastern Europe even greater for Moscow than to relieve oppression. Political mass communications addressed to the people as a whole should be performed by Western radios, while indirect operations should seek to intensify the degree of resistance of the members of the "controlling apparatus" (government functionaries and Communist Party members, diplomats, as well as factory managers, writers and journalists, teachers, and even university students) and to "pull them away from Soviet objectives and towards [...] national independence and individual liberties." Walker listed four policy objectives: national integrity, self-expression, intellectual curiosity, and a decentralization of

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<sup>22</sup> FEC Policy Group Paper, January 9, 1958, 1–2. Another Policy Paper dated July 1958 referred to "efforts directed at the centers of influence by radio, the printed word, other media, or personal contact." *Ibid.*

authority that should be fostered to help create indirect pressures so that Soviet objectives in the area would suffer.<sup>23</sup>

FEP also had to find a solution for the problem of attribution. The balloon-leaflet operations had been widely advertised by the Crusade for Freedom. From the start of the mailing project, it became apparent that this type of operation could not succeed if it were openly attributed to FEC/FEP. As a 1957 FEP editorial program noted, "It would be an open invitation to the censors to intercept whatever was being sent through the mails by 'the enemy.'" Also, material with the label of a known and easily identifiable propaganda organization like Free Europe would be received with apprehension by the recipients. Thus the need arose to find publishers, bookstores, and a variety of institutes and associations to act on a voluntary basis in a good-will effort as "sponsors," showing their name as the sender and providing their address for responses. The use of phony names and the production and use of unattributed material was rejected in favor of creating and subsidizing entities legally separated from FEC, which would continue to operate the Mailing Center and also sponsor Free World publications.<sup>24</sup>

The impressive figures achieved by the book distribution project could not have been possible without the willing participation and cooperation of the very large number of well-known and lesser-known American and West European book publishers, and of institutes and

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<sup>23</sup> Memoranda from S. S. Walker Jr. to General W. Crittenberger, February 26, 1957, and April 2, 1957; a Free Europe Press Editorial Group Paper, February 26, 1957, 1–20; plus a six-page appendix with national surveys of the five East European target countries dated February 1, 1957. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 262. Walker wrote his memo after consulting with Gregory Thomas (1908–1990), a former OSS member and president of Chanel Inc., and one of the more influential FEC directors until the early 1960s. General (ret.) Crittenberger (1890–1980) served as FEC President from 1956 to 1958. Another parallel FEP objective, namely to damage the Soviet position in the uncommitted Asian-Arab world, will not be addressed in this book. The same applies to FEP's extensive Free World Publications program using English-, German-, and French-language materials aimed at combating communist propaganda in Western Europe.

<sup>24</sup> Free Europe Press Editorial Group Paper, February 26, 1957, 18–19. *Ibid.* FEP was fully aware that such alternatives would make administration cumbersome and also complicate security.



organizations which, by acting as intermediaries and “sponsors,” became an integral part of the book project. Regular mailings meant extra sales and profits, but publishers usually also gave discounts for bulk-purchasing orders, and took care of the labeling, packaging, and dispatching of books. By 1962, FEC could count on 545 sponsors (239 in the U.S. and 306 in Europe), among them a sizable number of East European émigré organizations.<sup>25</sup> A 1963 list names a total of no less than 653 publishers or sponsors: 248 American (including roughly 22 university presses), 112 French, 64 British, 154 German, four Italian, seven Austrian, 12 Swiss, three Dutch, three Swedish, one Danish, 36 Polish (28 in England, eight in the USA, four in France), four Czechoslovak (two each in the USA and England), three Lithuanian (in the U.S.), one Hungarian (Új Látóhatár in Munich), and three Estonian (in Sweden).<sup>26</sup> Five years later, PSPD could count on 201 sponsors in the U.S., 66 in England (including 25 Polish, two Czechoslovak, and one Lithuanian), 121 in West Germany, 72 in France, 10 in Switzerland, seven in Austria, four in Sweden (including three Estonian), three in Italy, two in the Netherlands, and one in Denmark.<sup>27</sup>

Throughout its existence, the mailing project aimed at the thinking elites of East Europe was not publicized in the West or in the target countries, and its operation and field staffs were so dispersed that it would not appear to be a single, coordinated operation but a series of unrelated activities. Its entire activity was operational and under the direct supervision of the division director, and did not involve any “cover” work. Its method of payment was through FEC

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<sup>25</sup> Mailing Project Report, The President to the Executive Committee, July 26, 1962. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 31. A long-time and very successful book mailer in France was André Mari, son of a former mayor of Nice, who managed a bookstore in Aix-en-Provence.

<sup>26</sup> Mailing Project List of Sponsors, July 25, 1963, 1–7. HIA, Minden Papers, Box 3. The need for gaining or creating new sponsors became crucial with the expansion of the so-called person-to-person distribution program to East European visitors to the West.

<sup>27</sup> Mailing Project List of Sponsors, March 1, 1968. Ibid. The Hungarian publisher Occidental Press in Washington, D.C. should be added to both lists. See also “Publishers Pitch In,” in Matthews, “The West’s Secret Marshall Plan for the Mind,” 422–3.



checks, but the procedure could be channeled through an intermediary organization. As the countless sponsors and mailers, while being aware that FEC was paying for the operation, were unaware of the FEC/CIA connection, it was expected that book recipients and hopefully censors would think the books were genuine gifts from a large number of individual foundations, libraries, and publishers. In 1962, FEC concluded that this “cover system” had held up to Communist scrutiny for five years.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Communist Bloc Operations. Unsigned memorandum probably drafted by George Minden, February 1962, 1–10. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 191, Folder 6.

## CHAPTER 2

# Titles, Contents, Numbers, Targets, and Aims of the Mailings

The Minden Papers in the Hoover Institute Archives do not contain materials on the early book mailings operations in which the Munich office of Free Europe Press (FEP) played a crucial role. Fortunately, close to 40 monthly statistical reports and 36 summaries of responses received have been preserved by John Matthews, then director of the FEP Office in Munich. They cover the first three-and-half years of the book mailing project period, from July 1956 through December 1959. These reports, averaging 15 to 20 pages, contain the exact titles and the number of copies of the books and other publications (magazines subscriptions, catalogues, pamphlets, and even records) sent to each East European country, as well as the content, targets, and political aim(s) of the particular item mailed, called “message” in the reports. The messages consisted of two types of materials: books in both original languages and in translations, and reprints and translations of articles and monographs.

The very first mailings in July 1956 were intentionally small, with the purpose of increasing the volume of mail into the five target countries gradually. Thus, 11 titles with a total of 6,538 messages were sent that month to Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Romania, with an emphasis on increasing “liberalization” by contrasting the target country with the other captive nations. These messages included 1,660 copies of various articles and cross reports on the Polish “thaw,” some translated from *Nowa Kultura* and various Polish periodicals and Radio Warsaw broadcasts, with the aim to “make the recipients aware of the greater freedom of expression and discussion permitted

in Poland and to increase similar activity in the other captive nations.” 275 copies of a translation of selected poems of Adam Mickiewicz published by Noonday Press were sent to selected Polish libraries, universities, and writers. There were also other reproductions or translations of original articles in English, French, or German, such as 3,600 copies of a letter by Howard Fast from the July 12, 1956 issue of *U.S. Daily Worker*, in which one of the best-known communist novelists in the world described his horror at the contents of Khrushchev’s famous Secret speech. Sent to Party functionaries, intellectuals, and journalists, its objective was to indicate the disillusionment and confusion among Western Communist Party members at Khrushchev’s revelations and to promote the process of the satellite “thaw” and the popular demand for liberalization. Finally, 500 copies of a *Czech Student Declaration* from Prague, making sweeping demands for reform and the democratization of education and public and cultural life, were sent with the aim of giving a concrete example of the ferment in another satellite country and to increase such activity among similar student groups.<sup>1</sup>

While all policy directions came from New York, the FEP office in Munich played a major role in organizing and implementing the book project. Its head, Howard S. Weaver, a Yale friend of Sam Walker, and Warner Wolfe, an American of German extraction, were instrumental in setting up the mailing network and recruiting the motivated individuals who would deal with the publishers. They were fortunate to hire two highly intelligent young women, Martine Servot in Paris, and the Hungarian-born Daisy Finney in London, to deal with French and British publishers, respectively.<sup>2</sup> The messages were sent in batches from 200 to 2,000 or more per titles from fictitious cover organizations (the senders’ addresses were often those of the persons mailing them) from New York and other West European cities such as London, Paris, West Berlin, Amsterdam, Athens, Rome, Vienna, and Munich. By November

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<sup>1</sup> Free Europe Press, Mailing Project, unsigned Monthly Report No. 1, July 1956, dated August 21, 1956, 1–16. Courtesy of John P. C. Matthews. All subsequent monthly reports through December 1959 come from the same source.

<sup>2</sup> Matthews, “The West’s Secret Marshall Plan for the Mind,” 414–15, gives a good description of the backgrounds of the two ladies and their very effective *modus operandi* in approaching publishers and getting discounts.

1956, the book mailers could count on seven mailing centers in Europe and five in North America, and by February 1957, this number had risen to 24 in 14 countries. Their ingenuity knew no geographic limits, and many additional cities in the U.S., Canada, and Europe would be subsequently used: Boston, Chicago, Dayton, Detroit, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Montreal, Strasbourg, Bruges, Brussels, Bern, Geneva, Lausanne, Luzern, Zürich, Essen, Hamburg, Karlsruhe, Genoa, Milan, and Istanbul, as well as primarily Stockholm, Copenhagen, and Lund, and Malmö for mailings to the Baltic countries. The Munich office handled the mailing from all West German cities, including West Berlin, and dealt directly with West German printers and publishers. After 1959 and during the next three decades, London, Paris, Vienna, Rome, and New York remained the busiest and most often used mailing points, while others were dropped. Also, existing institutions and book publishers were more often used as senders to avoid suspicion.

The CIA supplied helpful information about the countries from which the mailings were carried out and offered to intervene if security or other problems would arise. Danish authorities were “sticky” because of a law forbidding political activity by foreigners, and mailings from that country were to be terminated. Materials from Sweden should be kept at a low volume in order not to attract attention, while Switzerland would take a dim view of propaganda and was “very sticky” about the use of correct postage. The Dutch authorities “might officially object to the project but would close their eyes to it unofficially,” and there were no problems with Italy, Greece, and Belgium. The CIA also had some concerns about the “phony names” sometimes selected for sponsoring a controversial mailing project for which a *bona fide* sponsor could not be found. If the name was too similar to a real organization “carrying out effective anti-communist action,” the latter could “become the object of Soviet Bloc attack.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Letters from Eliot B. Judane to David dated January 2, 1958, and March 28, 1958. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 32. On the basis of correspondence from the RFE/RL Corporate Records at HIA, this must be correspondence between “Eliot Judane” and “David Powers,” both pseudonyms for Emmons Brown, head of the Free Europe Branch of the CIA’s International Organizations (IO) Division, and Sam Walker, respectively. See also Meyer, *Facing Reality: From World Federation to the CIA*.

On the operational side, the mailing staff began to transfer all address material onto IBM cards, and the first 2,700 addresses were soon forwarded for card punching. By October 1956, there were over 32,000 addresses on cards, and the use of IBM facilities for office use was completed by mid-December. The Munich office completed the initial arrangements with 12 European "correspondents," supplied text materials, and increased the existing address lists with the arrival of new telephone directories. The editorial services department supplied materials for the projects and took steps to facilitate the procurement of European books. In August 1956, steps were taken for the organization of mailing projects for the three Baltic countries, with scheduling to those countries initiated in late October. More mailing points were being established on the American continent. The mailing project began to gather momentum, and there was a general increase of volume and a greater diversity of media in the form of articles, magazines, books, and pamphlets. The system of reporting in both directions between New York and Munich became more clearly defined, allowing for the expansion of mailings originating from Europe.

On the political side, the messages primarily emphasized the further possibilities of political, economic, and intellectual liberalization, but did so not as much directly as obliquely. This was to be done through books and articles presenting Western literature and suggesting areas of free discussion; studies of specific areas of Western progress and thought to encourage similar action and thought; books and pamphlets on the operation of Western economies, worker's rights, trade unions, modern capitalism, and Western socialism; Western impressions of Russia and Eastern Europe; critical regime-banned speeches and articles by Communists and former Communists dealing with political events in the area; East European impressions of the West and criticisms of Eastern Europe to suggest further liberalization; and materials dealing with past Soviet and satellite policy and action. The messages also emphasized the differences between Communists and Socialists and, by using materials from Western sources (Kenneth Galbraith, Massimo Salvadori, Adolphe Berle), aimed at provoking comparisons between the realities of communism and capitalism.

In the first three months of the project, a total of 42 titles and 21,488 messages had been dispatched, with Poland as the leading recipient country. Materials in the Polish language included 300 copies

of George Orwell's *1984*, 100 copies of Raymond Aron's *Opium of the Intellectuals*, and 50 copies of the novel *The Ninety and Nine* by Imre Kovács, a Hungarian exile writer and politician, on the Communist seizure of power in Hungary. Outright political materials included Khrushchev's Secret Speech, a speech by Italian Socialist leader Pietro Nenni, *Communism in Crisis* by Milovan Djilas, an article by Edvard Kardelj, *The Captive Mind* and *The Seizure of Power* by Czesław Miłosz, *Marx in Limbo* by Sidney Hook, *The Rebel* by Albert Camus, *Man in the Modern World* and *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley, and selected articles from *Borba*, *Avanti*, *Irodalmi Újság*, *World Politics*, *The New York Times*, *London Times*, *Le Monde*, *Demain*, *La Revue de la Pensée Française*, and articles from the Polish press for cross reporting purposes (*Nowa Kultura*, *Po Prostu*, *Przegląd Kulturalny*) and the émigré journal *Kultura* published in Paris. 150 copies of a Polish-English dictionary were sent to libraries, writers, and intellectuals to alleviate the shortage of such dictionaries, to help them to read literature and future mailings from the West, and to increase their interest in English and American culture, thereby creating greater intellectual freedom. Subsequently, these Polish libraries and intellectuals also received a copy of *Anthology of Polish Poetry* by the Polish Library in Paris, and *The Origins of Russia* by H. Paszkiewicz.<sup>4</sup>

In order to elicit responses, 200 copies of the Dover Publications Catalogue were mailed to libraries in Czechoslovakia with a letter from the publisher stating that a sample of any book listed would be sent upon request, followed by 200 copies of the German literary and political monthly *Der Monat*, with a free subscription offer. 124 Polish professors were offered a free, one-year subscription to *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, and 150 libraries, publications, and journalists a subscription offer to *The Polish Review*, a literary and political quarterly published by the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America. Rosa Luxemburg's *The Problems of Dictatorship* and *Democracy and Dictatorship* were sent to

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<sup>4</sup> Free Europe Press, Mailing Project Activities, Monthly Report No. 3, September 1956, dated October 18, 1956, 1–7. Following the Polish October of 1956, a Stalinist government was replaced by one of “national communism” headed by Władysław Gomułka that sought better relations with the West, ceased the harassment of the Catholic Church, ended the collectivization of agriculture, and restored academic freedom.

Party cadres in Bulgaria “to promote fractionalism in the Party by reinforcing ideological heresies and deviations.” Intellectuals in Bulgaria were treated to 400 copies of the *Chekhov Catalogue of White Russian Books* by the Chekhov Publishing House of the East European Fund, Inc., a catalogue in Russian of White Russian publications published from 1952 to 1956, with a letter offering one free book of the reader’s choice. The aim was to invite responses, because until the end of 1956, only two responses to over 23,000 messages sent had been received from Bulgaria, compared to 334 responses from Poland to 29,475 messages sent. The free offer system was subsequently enlarged and frequently used to gain new requests, new names, and new addresses.

During the latter part of October 1956, mailings to Hungary were suspended pending clarification of the political situation in the country and the resumption of mail delivery. Until then, a total of 12 titles and 6,650 messages had been sent to Hungary, and these figures would remain unchanged until mailings were resumed in July 1957. In view of the preceding political developments, selectivity was used in choosing readership for messages mailed in December. Messages to Poland stressed ties with the West, while the approach to the other countries and, for the first time, the Baltic countries relied heavily on Polish and Hungarian materials. 500 copies of the October 20, 1956 critical speech of Polish Party leader Władysław Gomułka were sent from Copenhagen to a cross section of the population of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania with the aim to “encourage similar de-Stalinization and democratization.”<sup>5</sup>

In its first six months of operations, FEP mailed a cumulative total of 127 titles and 87,283 books and periodicals, with 34% of the publications going to Poland, 26% to Bulgaria, 18% to Romania, and the remainder to Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Responses began to arrive in increasingly large numbers from Poland—334 in all—but barely trickled in from Czechoslovakia (12), Hungary (seven), Bulgaria (two), and Romania (one)—clearly indicating where censorship was the most severe. A total of 15 different mailings points were used, with New York leading with 35 mailings, followed by Paris (27), London (20), Vienna (18), and Rome and Copenhagen (13 each).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Monthly Report No. 6, December 1956, dated January 9, 1957, 1–9, *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

Acceleration and diversification characterized the book mailing program during the first half of 1957. The messages sent aimed at keeping the window to the West open and at reinforcing the trends existing in the target area by supplying discursive material geared to specific problems encountered in each of the target countries. The address system was further developed, allowing mailings to reach highly selective audiences. Texts used were mostly Western books, magazines, brochures, and newspaper reprints on subjects of particular interest to the elites, with a wide range of objectives to strengthen the spirit of national independence and popularize Western methods of running a decentralized society. The messages also included critiques of Stalinism and critical analyses of Marxism targeting Party functionaries, and exposés of Western economic systems and technical progress, American capitalism, and operations of free trade unions in the West for East European industrial managers and union officials. Also sent were Western reactions to events in Hungary, developments in Poland, Polish and Yugoslav revisions of communist theory and practice, and writings on youth problems in the West and the USSR. A policy of maximum diversification was implemented and the number of book titles progressively increased. By March 1957, with the number of replies growing, publications sent on request also began to rise. Greater emphasis was placed on the popularization of unfamiliar aspects of Western cultural achievements in music, art, architecture, literature, and of general works on the history of Western ideas, philosophy, and traditions.<sup>7</sup>

A summary report from May 1957 stressed the following activities: the increased diversification and the pursuit of the four policy objectives of national integrity by sending the original texts of protests against Soviet hegemony raised in Yugoslavia and East Germany, and unpurged history books and ethnic literature otherwise not available; the self-expression of intellectual defectors by reporting their critiques of the monolithic Communist system; the stimulation of intellectual curiosity by furnishing copies of Western literary, political, and other magazines, and by informing about the progress of Western European

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<sup>7</sup> Monthly Report No. 9, March 1957, dated April 1957, 1–2, Ibid. The cumulative total of responses stood at 670, with 624 received from Poland and the rest from four other target countries, including one from Latvia.



unification and the American way of government; and the decentralization of authority through literature on co-determination in industry in the UK, the U.S., and Scandinavia, as well as on the law as a check on central authority.<sup>8</sup> With increasing frequency, intellectuals were given the opportunity to select books of their choice free of charge from the catalogues sent to them, establishing the West as the “arsenal of thinking” and helping independent thought by a variety of works devoid of direct political involvement. In order to maintain contact between Eastern Europe and her writers in exile, works by these writers in their respective languages were also sent to show their active contribution to the literary life of the Free World.<sup>9</sup>

During the second half of 1957, and mainly on the basis of the responses generated by its mailings, FEP concluded that the main thing it was up against was not Marxist obstruction, but a vacuum. Instead of being taught how to fight back Communism and counter Party arguments, East Europeans “needed something that would compensate for the sterility of satellite cultural life [...] and the ban on encyclopedic education imposed by the Communists [...] and the lack of humanistic thinking.” To combat frustration and stultification, the banned Western sources of intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic life should be made available. To achieve this, the book mailing program had to concentrate on four main objectives: to correct thinking from intelligent speculation to simple logic and factual information; to promote a minimum of Western values through psychology, literature, the theatre, and visual arts; to achieve basic linguistic understanding by increasing the share of French and German material and translations, and by sending anthologies in national languages as well as means of learning English; and to send certain publications of current and paramount interest unavailable in Eastern Europe. In sum, the West should supply “a feeling of communion in this world, integration into the

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<sup>8</sup> Monthly Report No. 10, May 1957, dated June 1957, 1–19, *Ibid.* By early 1957, the FEP Mailing Center had selected and classified on IBM cards over 60,000 addresses according to 67 individual characteristics. Free Europe Press Editorial Program, February 27, 1957, 15, *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Monthly Report No. 12 and No. 13, July and August 1957, dated September 3, 1957, 1–21, *Ibid.*

intellectual and spiritual life of our age, and the knowledge that they (the East Europeans) have not been abandoned.”<sup>10</sup>

Mailings of non-political nature to Hungary were resumed in July 1957, with 200 copies of *Graphic '57*, 150 copies of *Interbau Berlin 1957* to architectural institutions, 50 copies of *Paris Match* to libraries, and 100 copies of *Elle* to women's clubs, hotels, and dressmakers. This was followed in August by 300 copies of a Polish cross reporting with excerpts from the Polish press and Radio Warsaw broadcasts dealing with manifestations of the “thaw,” such as attacks on Stalinist stagnation and criticisms of current conditions. By the summer of 1957, the three Baltic countries combined had received 15 titles, totaling close to 7,200 copies from locations as varied as New York, Chicago, Copenhagen, Zurich, and Munich.

The number of titles and messages sent to the eight target countries continued to climb throughout the remainder of the year, with Poland still by far the leading recipient. During the first 18 months of the book project, the country received a total of 326 titles representing some 112,423 books and periodicals, or 27% of the total messages sent. It was followed by Bulgaria with 188 titles and 98,025 messages (23.6%), Czechoslovakia with 214 titles and 82,752 messages (20%), and Romania with 160 titles and 64,524 messages (15.5%). With only 36 titles and 8,305 messages, Hungary was last (2%), behind Latvia with 11,636 messages (2.8%), Estonia with 11,094 (2.7%), and Lithuania with 8,415 (2%). In addition, over 4,000 books, subscriptions, magazines, dictionaries, pamphlets, and catalogues had been sent on request, with the majority going to Poland. By December 31, 1957, a total of 2,008 responses had been received from East Europe. Of these, 1,772 (88.2%) came from Poland, followed by Czechoslovakia with 103 responses, Bulgaria with 47, Romania with 23, Hungary with 21, and Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania with 14 each. The discrepancy clearly showed in which countries censorship was most severe.<sup>11</sup> Eventually, FEP had to admit that it was mailing too

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<sup>10</sup> Summary of Activities, Monthly Report No. 14, September 1957, dated October 25, 1957, 1–2, Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Monthly Report No. 17, December 1957, dated January 31, 1958, 1–17, Ibid. These figures do not include those for the Monthly Report for October 1957, which is missing.

much and could no longer handle the flow of books mailed without developing a backlog that would only perpetuate itself. For the sake of both speed and security, it approached The Bookmailer, Inc., a bookstore-by mail service, which would prepare labels from FEP's address lists for books mailed from New York.<sup>12</sup>

In late 1957, in a reply to a West German Foreign Office request for information, John Matthews provided a candid and detailed account of the FEP's gradual replacement of its balloon-leaflet operation with two new ones: one directed toward Eastern Europe and called the Mailing Project, the other toward Western Europe through the publishing and dissemination of materials about events in Eastern Europe. Through the mailing of Western articles, books, and other printed matter to the intelligentsia of Eastern Europe, the project's aim was "to reinforce their natural Westward orientation and weaken Soviet control over them." This was done through a network of "mailers" in most major cities in Western Europe, and "through independent negotiations with specific publishers all over Europe who send books and magazines at our expense to East European addresses provided by us [...] according to the profession of the recipient." Matthews stated that up to September 1957, 894 titles and a total of 360,108 items had been mailed from North America and Western Europe, only a small fraction of which had been mailed from the Federal Republic.<sup>13</sup>

By May 1958, FEP noted that the large number of non-controversial materials sent in the winter and spring of that year "had created an atmosphere of relaxation" favorable to the sending of a large number of books and anthologies translated in the languages of the target countries and "containing antagonistic political material." As a consequence of this change, FEP also expected some of the translations to be rejected and returned to the sponsors, and others "to reach not our addressees but a reading public chosen by the vicissitudes of local

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<sup>12</sup> FEC Memorandum on Mailing Operations from D. M. Cox to J. G. Kirk, dated October 7, 1958, 1–2. The Bookmailer had its own print shop and would also do gift cards and letters.

<sup>13</sup> Letter of John F. Matthews to Dr. Dirk Oncken, Auswärtiges Amt, Bonn, dated November 26, 1957. Courtesy of A. Ross Johnson. Matthews also named some of the materials published for West German distribution.

censorship.”<sup>14</sup> Several books mailed to Poland were eventually mentioned in the Polish press. *Życie Gospodarcze* (August 3, 1958) printed a book review of *The Future of Socialism* by C. A. R. Crosland. The Polish translation of *Anthology of English and American Poetry*, edited by Paul Mayewski, was reviewed in *Nowa Kultura* (September 27, 1958) by Antoni Slonimski, Chairman of the Polish Writers’ Union, who praised the book as a whole and commented that such a publication was very much needed in Poland.<sup>15</sup> *Czas Niepokoju* (Time of anxiety) by Pawel Mayewski was favorably reviewed in *Twórczość* in Warsaw (No. 11, November 1958), Poland’s main literary periodical, which wrote that the book should be on the desk of every critic. *Rudé Právo* in Prague, the main organ of the Czechoslovak communist party, quoted several passages from an article in the émigré publication *Svědění* on President Beneš’s wartime negotiations in Moscow, calling them “interesting facts.”<sup>16</sup> Reviews continued to appear in 1959 in Poland, with a long review in *Panstwo i Prawo* in Warsaw (January 1959) of *The Rebirth of the Polish Republic* by Titus Komarnicki, and a favorable review of *The Polish Review*, sent regularly to Poland, in the February 1959 issue of *Twórczość*. The director of the Medical Documentation Service in Budapest, a university professor, in a 13-page article in *Horus* (No. 1, 1959), a publication of the Service, analyzed the book *Erforscher des Lebens* (Explorers of life), mailed to Hungary, and had only words of praise for its authors.<sup>17</sup> More favorable reviews continued to appear in Warsaw in March and April 1959 in *Twórczość*, *Mechanik*, and *Życie Gospodarcze*, and *Kwartalnik Historyczny* (No. 1, 1959) reviewed *Cahiers de Bruges*.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Monthly Report No. 22, May 1958, dated June 1958, 1.

<sup>15</sup> Free Europe Press, Summary of Responses to Mailing Operations, Report No. 23, September 1 to September 30, 1958, dated October 20, 1958, 1, Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Report No. 26, December 1 to December 31, 1958, dated January 23, 1, Ibid. The review of Mayewski’s anthology was reprinted in a book of essays entitled *Articles of Basic Importance* by Antoni Slonimski.

<sup>17</sup> Report No. 29, March 1 to March 31, 1959, dated April 17, 1959, Ibid. In a side-remark, the author of the *Horus* article satirized the Soviet “worship of technical progress” as old-fashioned and completely false.

<sup>18</sup> Undated Report No. 30, April 1 to April 30, 1959, 1, and undated Report No. 31, May 1 to May 31, 1959, 1, *ibid*.

Because of their sheer number, only the most salient authors, book titles, and magazine titles sent in 1957, 1958, and 1959 will be mentioned here: Hannah Arendt, Nicolas Berdiaev, Isaiah Berlin, Jozef Maria Bochenski, Max Born, Crane Brinton, Albert Camus, Ernest Cassirer, Winston Churchill, Henry Steele Commager, Paul Claudel, Benedetto Croce, Christopher Dawson, Milovan Djilas (*The New Class*), Dudintsev (*Not by Bread Alone*), Mircea Eliade, Howard Fast, William Faulkner, Francois Fejtő, Pierre Gaxotte, Graham Greene, Walter Gropius, Sidney Hook, Aldous Huxley, Eugene Ionesco, Karl Jaspers, Franz Kafka, Hans Kelsen, George Kennan,<sup>19</sup> Hans Kohn, Leszek Kołakowski, Rosa Luxemburg, André Malraux, Karl Mannheim, Herbert Marcuse, André Maurois, Adam Mickiewicz, Czesław Miłosz, Lewis Mumford, Gunnar Myrdal, Reinhold Niebuhr, José Ortega y Gasset (*The Revolt of the Masses*), George Orwell, Boris Pasternak, Gaetan Picon, Karl Polányi, George Santayana, Jean-Paul Sartre, Joseph Schumpeter, Hugh Seton-Watson, Ignazio Silone, Norman Thomas, Arnold Toynbee, Lionel Trilling, Piotr Wandycz, Karl Wittvogel, Bertram Wolfe, Frank Lloyd Wright, and many others. Topics covered were very comprehensive and included politics and ideology, history, literature, arts, architecture and music, especially jazz, philosophy and religion, economics, business and management, trade unionism, youth problems, linguistics, and English, French, and German dictionaries, reference books, and catalogues.

One of the most successful mailings was that of Alexander Eliott's *Three Hundred Years of American Painting*, sent by the Whitney Museum of American Art to all target countries.<sup>20</sup> A large number of the books sent to Poland were by Polish authors living in the West, and Polish

<sup>19</sup> In 1958, George Kennan, who was declared *persona non grata* in the Soviet Union, was invited to deliver a lecture on international relations in Warsaw. This was in line with Poland's cultural policy at that time, followed in 1959 by a tighter control of culture.

<sup>20</sup> The book was warmly received, went from hand to hand, and was praised in a stream of letters by intellectuals and artists in Eastern Europe. Even *Literární noviny*, the weekly of the Czechoslovak Writers' Union, gave it mixed praise and called it "a step in the right direction [...] better than mailing to our cultural workers various revisionist scribblings dealing with national communism." *Time* publisher James A. Linen, "Letter from the Publisher," *Time*, March 24, 1958.

translations of books about American literature, economics, and philosophy, along with the Polish émigré journal *Wiadomości*. Many of the books sent to the Baltic countries also included works by exile authors in the Free World. Baltic authors included the Estonians Gert Helbema, Bernard Kangro, Raimond Kolk, Jaan Kuusk, Helmi Mäelo, and Andrus Saaraste, as well as Dr. P. Alvet's *Koduarst* Vol. I–II; the Latvians Anšlavs Eglītis, Aleksandrs Čask, Ojars Jegens, Juris Jurevics, Valdemars Karklins, Andrievs Niedra, and Teodors Zeltiņš; and the Lithuanians Jonas Aistis, Kazys Barėnas, and Janis Rainis, just to name a few.

*Dr. Zhivago* was one of the most coveted books among East European readers. Pasternak sent the manuscript in 1956 to the Italian communist publisher Feltrinelli on the assumption that it would be published in the Soviet Union. It was rejected in the journal *Novy Mir* on the grounds that it was hostile to the October Revolution. Pasternak and various Soviet officials tried without success to regain possession of the manuscript. The novel was published in 1957 in Milan in Italian translation, and Albert Camus nominated Pasternak for a Nobel Prize in Literature. Publications in English and French, and, in 1958, in Russian, soon followed, and the success of the novel and Pasternak's Nobel Prize infuriated the Soviet regime. There is strong evidence to assume that the Russian translation was initiated and financed by the CIA.<sup>21</sup>

Next to the aftermath of the Polish October and Yugoslav revisionism, special emphasis was given to the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and its crushing by the USSR by mailing a very large number of copies of the text of the UN Resolution on Hungary, the Report of the UN Special Committee on Hungary, Imre Nagy's "My Beliefs" (a pamphlet), Noel Barber's "Personal from Budapest," articles in the American, French, British, Swiss, Yugoslav, and Polish press condemning the Soviet intervention in Hungary, and "Hungary Under Soviet Rule," a survey of

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<sup>21</sup> On the CIA and *Dr. Zhivago*, see Proffer, "A Footnote on the Zhivago Affair," 130–8; Ivan Tolstoi, "Was Pasternak's Path to the Nobel Prize Paved by the CIA?," 1–5, [www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1496794.html](http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1496794.html); and Idem, "Zhivago," Stanford Report, October 17, 2007. The CIA has refused to comment on Tolstoi's report. In a letter to the FEC, the Agency presumed that "You are making plans to mail Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago*." Eliot B. Judane to David (Powers), March 11, 1958. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 32.

developments in the country since the UN Report on Hungary. A large number of American, British, German, French, Swiss, and Austrian magazines and book catalogues were also sent, often with an offer of a free one-year subscription or of a free book of the recipient's choice—a very effective way to elicit responses as well as new names and addresses. To name just a few: *Atlantis*, *Bauen und Wohnen*, *Chatham House Review*, *Current History*, *Der Monat*, *Elle*, *Encounter*, *Madame Magazine*, *National Geographic Magazine*, *Ost-Europa*, *Popular Mechanics*, *Preuves*, *The Review of Politics*, *Swiss Review of Foreign Affairs*, and *Vogue*, plus a number of Polish and Hungarian periodicals published in the West. 300 copies of the *Chekhov Catalogue of White Russian Publications* were mailed to a cross section of the population in each of the Baltic countries, and 300 copies of a Latvian Book Catalogue listing all Latvian-language publications in the U.S. were sent to Latvian teachers, scientists, and intellectuals, accompanied by an offer of a free book.

The response of the population of the targeted countries, cut off from Western books and periodicals since the imposition of communism, was overwhelmingly positive, especially from the Polish recipients. Throughout 1958 and 1959, the mailing project steadily picked up speed and scope. Two years after its start, it had reached the half-million mark, with over 505,157 publications (2,029 titles) plus some 2,400 requested items sent to the target countries. By the end of 1958, the grand total was 550,405 copies of 2,583 titles. The number of responses also continued to grow rapidly, reaching a cumulative total of 6,500 by the end of 1958 and 15,327 by the end of 1959. The vast majority of the letters came from Poland (10,911), followed by Hungary (2,009), and Czechoslovakia (1,142). Surprisingly, Estonia, with 433 responses, was ahead of both Bulgaria (415) and Romania (151), with Latvia (130) and Lithuania (54) coming in last. Requests also started to arrive *en masse*, rising from over 3,000 by the end of 1958 to a cumulative total of close to 8,500 by the end of 1959. From July 1956 through December 1959, FEP dispatched a total of approximately 670,000 books and periodicals in 5,500 titles to nine countries, including 195 items (13 titles and 15 responses) sent to the USSR between April and September 1959. The majority of the mailings went to Poland (some 197,000), followed by Bulgaria (128,000), Czechoslovakia (123,400), Romania (98,000), and Hungary (26,500). Latvia received 23,000 messages, Estonia 21,660, and Lithuania 16,300. Of the 5,342 items



sent on request in 1959, 1,944 went to Poland, 1,679 to Hungary, and 541 to Czechoslovakia. Between March and September 1959, 12 titles (unnamed in the reports) totaling 165 copies were also mailed for the first time to the USSR, eliciting 15 responses.<sup>22</sup>

In the summer of 1959, after witnessing the World Youth Festival in Vienna, Sam Walker and John Kirk travelled to Poland and the Soviet Union, while Edmund Stillman travelled to Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. They had conversations with some 35 publishers, writers, and government officials, surveyed a large number of bookstores and distribution outlets, and held preliminary negotiations for the distribution of Western books in Poland and Bulgaria. They concluded that “U.S. objectives stand to gain from East-West exchanges and contacts, insofar as they deal in the field of ideas [...] Western books, jazz, abstract art—even the study of the English language—have political connotations which are in some ways as powerful as *The New Class* and more pointed than *Dr. Zhivago*.” Walker felt that “nationalism and materialism (plus religion in Poland) to be the most significant motivating forces in Eastern Europe today.” This was so because the managerial elites and people in general were preoccupied with “problems of everyday living and with pragmatic answers to such problems, void of ideological content from the Communist viewpoint. Anything smacking of propaganda is rejected out of hand by people whose one conditioned reflex is skepticism.” Walker concluded that next to the intellectual elites, more attention might be given to the managerial elites, which were large and powerful because they were indispensable to the state machine. Yet his conclusion that non-political books could, almost without exception, be obtained in Poland, proved to be somewhat optimistic.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Mailing Operations, Report No. 29, December 1958, dated January 5, 1959, 1–11, and undated Report No. 141, December 1959, 1–9. Report No. 31 for February 1959 is missing.

<sup>23</sup> FEC Activity Report, July–August, September, Summary and Conclusions, probably written by Sam Walker and dated October 5, 1959, 1–2. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 191, Folder 6. Edmund (Ed) O. Stillman (1924–1983) joined FEC in 1953, became Manager of the Research and Analysis Department under Walker in 1954, and of the Plans and Analysis Department in 1956. He resigned in 1959 to become President of Hudson Research Europe, an independent policy research group based in Paris. He is the author of several books on American politics.





## CHAPTER 3

# The Man in the Grey Suit

### *George C. Minden and his Concept of Cultural and Ideological Competition*

During the 1970s, new covers—the International Advisory Council, Inc., and, after 1975, the International Literary Centre, Ltd.—were used to make the book project even less visible to the “other side.” Following the resignation of Sam Walker, the Free Europe Organization and Publication (FEOP) Division was established on July 1, 1959, through the merger of Free Europe Press and Free Europe European Operations (FEEO) under the direction of Robert Minton, with George C. Minden as supervisor of the division’s book mailing project. Two years later, Minden became director of the newly created Communist Bloc Operations Department (CBOD), and thereafter managed the program without interruption until its termination in September 1991.

Born George Robert Căpuțineanu Minden in 1920 in Bucharest, Romania, his citizenship was listed as Romanian and his nationality as British, through his father Robert, born in 1896 in Hull, Yorkshire. Of German descent and the owner of a shipping company in Hamburg and London, Robert served in World War I as a lieutenant in the German army and was sent to Romania, where he met and married George Minden’s mother, Maria Teohari, a niece of Mihai Căpuțineanu (1878–1948), a well-to-do oil magnate. George was three when his parents divorced, and he was brought up by his maternal grandmother and his great-uncle Mihai Căpuțineanu. He earned a civil law degree from the University of Bucharest in 1943, and, together with his brother, was legally adopted at age 18 by their great-uncle for inheritance purposes, after which he became a landowner and oilman. Following the communist takeover and the confiscation of his lands,

Minden managed, thanks to his British passport, to leave Romania for England in 1946 with his wife Margarete and their two children. He earned a teaching degree from Cambridge University, but his marriage ended in divorce. From 1948 to 1954, he taught English in Cartagena and Madrid in Spain, where he met and married his second wife, Marilyn from Pittsburgh, USA. In 1954–1955, Minden became director of the School for Modern Languages in Mexico City. In March 1955, the family moved to the United States, arriving by ship from Guatemala to New Orleans. In August of that year, Minden joined FEC's Romanian Desk as an analyst and research specialist, and became its Desk Chief one year later. Minden became a U.S. citizen in 1958, and was promoted to Department Head of the Free Europe Press' Book Center, which handled the book mailing project. Because his involvement was needed for the screening and reviewing of some of the material sent in support of the mailing project, it became necessary to brief him in 1959 on FEC's relationship with the "Executive Committee"—the euphemism used for the CIA—and to upgrade his clearance to #1.<sup>1</sup> On May 1, 1961, FEC President John Richardson, Jr.,<sup>2</sup> who had succeeded Archibald S. Alexander as FEC President, appointed him director of the newly created Communist

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<sup>1</sup> HIA, George Minden Collection, Box 1, Biographic File. The vetting was needed because of the departure of Ed Stillman and in order to unburden Robert Minton. An earlier candid confidential memo from Kirk to Myers dated May 26, 1958, reads: "The regularity with which our friends have used the Mailing Project for their own dark purposes has strained our ingenuity vis-à-vis George [...]." After he was briefed, Minden signed "the usual [nondisclosure] agreement." Letter from the Director of Personnel [FEC] to the Executive Committee, July 17, 1959. During World War II, Robert Minden worked for British intelligence. He passed away in 1955. All biographical information is from Marilyn Minden's correspondence with the author (2008–2011).

<sup>2</sup> John Richardson, Jr. (1921–), ex-paratrooper, lawyer, and banker, was offered the post of FEC president by CIA Director Allen W. Dulles (1893–1969) and held it from 1961 to 1969. He then served as U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs from 1969 to 1977 (Richardson, *Oral History Interview*, dated February 9, 1999). Archibald S. Alexander (1906–1979), a lawyer and politician, was FEC President from 1959 to 1961. Richardson brought much-needed stability and continuity to FEC, which had had four presidents in its first ten years.

Bloc Operations Department (CBOD) and as supervisor of FEC's *East Europe* magazine.<sup>3</sup>

In March 1963, Minden became director of FEC's Publications and Special Projects Division (PSPD). With the trust and full support of John Richardson, who had the greatest admiration for his abilities, he took over the entire management and operation of the book distribution program, which was now in its seventh year. In addition to his Cambridge diploma, Minden earned an MA in Comparative Literature from New York University in 1960 and spoke, next to Romanian, flawless English, French, and Spanish. A man of vast knowledge and culture, he was well versed in East European affairs and in Spanish-language literature, and often ended his office memos with short Latin sentences.<sup>4</sup> John P. C. Matthews described him as follows: "Then in his early 30s, Minden's handsome longish Latin face featured dark, sad eyes every bit as arresting as those in a Byzantine mosaic."<sup>5</sup> For many of those who worked with George Minden, he remained a mystery man, always very serious, at times moody and lost in his thoughts, invariably dressed in a grey suit of which he must have had many. He was always well organized, and hard working. Practically nothing was known about his private life, except that he was married and had children, one of whom, a son, lived in Lausanne. He was extremely conscious about security, and even his wife Marilyn never came to his office. When his seven-year old son Paul asked him what he did, Minden told him: "I am a cowboy but you must tell no one." And when his son became suspicious and asked him why he was wearing a grey suit and no cowboy hat, his father explained: "No one knows I am a cowboy except you and a hat would give me away." Today, Paul

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<sup>3</sup> Strictly confidential memorandum based on Richardson's announcement, from Director of Security [FRC] to the Executive Committee, July 14, 1961. Minden's signature as Chief, Dept. 2, already appears on a series of PEP Project Schedules throughout 1957 and 1958. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Microfiche Reel 10.

<sup>4</sup> On the back of the photograph showing him as an aging man, Minden wrote philosophically: "Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis" ["Times change and we change with them"]. HIA, George Minden Collection, Box 1.

<sup>5</sup> Matthews, "The West's Secret Marshall Plan for the Mind," 413.

Minden suspects his father's lighthearted cowboy joke was "a playful indicator of his to us of what he did."<sup>6</sup>

Following the so-called Kallenbach Report from 1967 and the revelation that FEC and Radio Free Europe were from the start financed by the CIA—until then an open secret nobody wanted to talk about—the book program was separated from FEC, now financed by the U.S. Congress. In 1971, it was put under the cover of an already existing fictitious entity in New York City, the International Advisory Council, Inc. (IAC), of which George Minden became President after resigning from FEC in January. In July 1975, IAC merged with Radio Liberty's covert book mailing program aimed at the Soviet Union, and assumed the name of International Literary Centre, Ltd. (ILC), with Minden in full control. For over more than 20 years, until September 1991, Minden managed with great talent and energy the vast network of book mailers, book publishers, and book distributors in the U.S. and in Western Europe needed to carry out the basic objective of the program. Probably because he was extremely security-conscious and expected the same from his staff, Minden's organization, unlike Radio Free Europe, was never penetrated, exposed, or openly attacked, even though the East European communist regimes were well aware of the book distribution project. In his memoirs, Richardson gives high praise to the book project that was, he said, managed by "a brilliant Romanian-American, George Caputineanu Minden, assisted by a tiny staff of topflight refugee intellectuals based in our New York office. They functioned so effectively that the combined efforts of the Soviet KGB and satellite secret services never did expose or disrupt this vast, secretly funded enterprise." Richardson called Minden a "wonderful man [...] a genius very careful about security," and the book project "the most secret thing I was involved in."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Letter by Paul Minden to the author, July 12, 2010. During the 1980s, Paul eventually found out that the book project was government-funded, but he did not suspect it was the CIA until he read Matthews's article from 2003. When he came to America, Minden had his beautiful double-breasted grey suits tailored in London retailored into single-breasted ones, so that people would not suspect he was a dapper mafia don.

<sup>7</sup> Richardson, *A New Vision of America*, 96–7, and *Oral History Interview*, February 9, 1999, 1–49.

Actually, the IAC was mentioned once during the October 1979 closed-door trial in Prague of four members of VONS, the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Persecuted founded in 1978. Prosecutor Vladislav Adamec charged the accused with contacts with “foreign provocatory organizations” and with publishing VONS material in *Listy*, an émigré newspaper edited in Rome by Jiří Pelikán and in the Paris newspaper *Svědectví* edited by Pavel Tigrid. According to Adamec, “The activity of these emigrants is directed and subsidized by the American CIA, with which Pelikan and Tigrid are linked through a cover organization for American espionage, the International Advisory Council. The CIA guides the subversive activities of Pelikan and Tigrid through this organization.”<sup>8</sup>

A man of great discretion and honor who never broke the rules, Minden never wrote about, gave interviews, or even discussed his own achievements and his long career. Although, up to 2005, this author met him again several times in New York, George Minden always declined to discuss the book project, and chose instead to talk about Transylvanian history or old monasteries in Moldavia. He passed away in 2006 at age 86.<sup>9</sup>

Thanks to a number of project schedules, FEP office correspondence, and his first analytical summaries dating back to 1958 and 1959, it is possible to follow the ascendancy of George Minden and his strong personal impact on the mailing program. Minden was very critical of Hugh Seton-Watson’s study of the FEP mailing operation and his finding that it was “too much analysis (although quite good) and too

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<sup>8</sup> CIA Document 82-0085R000200020056-6 approved for release on September 12, 2005, 5. It was at this trial that Václav Havel, one of the book project’s most prominent recipients, was sentenced to four-and-half-years imprisonment. The source of Matthews’s claim that Minden’s visits to exile centers in Czechoslovakia caught the attention of the Czech military service and never mentioned his name, could not be verified by this author.

<sup>9</sup> George Minden’s Obituary in *The New York Times*, April 23, 2006. See also this author’s meetings in February 2008 in New York, as well as subsequent correspondence, with Mrs. Marilyn Minden. Minden had four children: Michaela in New York and Nicholas in Lausanne from his first marriage, and John and Paul in New York and Los Angeles, respectively, from his second marriage.

little (if any) planning for new situations about to arise.” For Minden, the balloon project showed the Free World’s “interest in the forlorn hope of east Europe,” and the mailing project was not a “pis-aller (‘last resort’) for the balloons, but a right step in the direction of more nearly normal contacts.” He concluded: “The Rumanian [sic] desk shall go on with the mailing project” and contribute to it with “the selection of a minimum of 25,000 addresses.”<sup>10</sup>

In another memo from 1958, Minden objected to the compilation of a number of essays and articles by “revisionists” or by critics of Marxism, as this would reduce to nil the prestige of the local revisionists in Poland. He also warned about the difficulty of presenting East European readers with American culture in a nutshell, and recommended the translation of the best books available on the subject, Max Lerner’s *American Civilization*, and Kenneth Galbraith’s *Affluent Society*. He urged caution in the selection of Western press articles on Eastern Europe and the USSR as well as on foreign affairs, and recommended that the selection of future anthologies should be based on “some purposeful criterion.”<sup>11</sup> A year later, in a memo to Walker’s successor Robert Minton, Minden reacted to earlier suggestions made by the Executive Committee (“our knowledgeable friends”), pointing out that they were based on incomplete information and that most of the recommended U.S. books and periodicals had already been sent. He added that more copies could be mailed “provided the censors don’t crack down on us.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Minden to Sam Walker, fall 1956, 1–6. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 191, Folder 6. Throughout the entire book project, Minden always used the terms “Rumania” and “Rumanians,” keeping the older English spelling. According to Marilyn Minden, “[George] felt that the change in English spelling that Ceaușescu promulgated (to emphasize Rumania’s ties to Rome and the West, C. said) resulted in everybody mispronouncing the name of the country.” Marilyn Minden to the author, July 17, 2012.

<sup>11</sup> Handwritten memorandum from Minden to S. S. Walker, Jr., dated June 3, 1958, 1–3, Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Memorandum from Minden to Minton dated August 18, 1959, 1–2, *ibid*. The CIA had suggested expanding the mailing project to university professors and literati, and including a wider selection of publications on Western history and culture and on Western governments. It also suggested mailing more periodicals and professional journals. The letter listed some

Minden drafted the first comprehensive analysis of the mailing operations' response patterns for the first two years of the program. Between July 1956 and September 1958, he reported, FEP poured through its Mailing Center approximately half a million books, periodicals, and pamphlets in English, French, German, Russian, Italian, and eight East European and Baltic languages into its eight target countries. The complete, until then classified, list of all the titles sent until August 1958 was also made available. According to Minden:

The tactical aim of our operation is to place as high a number as possible of books containing vital information in all fields of knowledge in the hands of those best suited by their position to a) receive books coming from abroad and b) act as centers of knowledge-spreading with a minimum risk to themselves. Our ultimate goal, however, is that of reaching the news-eager masses who cannot get the printed word from abroad directly. In other words, what we are trying to build up behind the Iron Curtain is a number of circulating libraries, going from our addressees to the reading public, thus helping the long sequestered East Europeans keep in touch with the Free World's thinking, have the facts that their Russian and national oppressors try to hide from them and, in general, make thought-stimulating and informative material available to them.<sup>13</sup>

This was done by using the names, personal data, and postal addresses of some 135,000 individuals and institutions. After pointing out the political and propagandistic value of good non-political material, Minden characterized the operation with Larousse's celebrated motto, "Je sème à tout vent" ("I sow to all winds").<sup>14</sup>

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20 book- and U.S. magazine titles which "you may have already used." The Executive Committee to the President [FEC], August 12, 1959, 1-3. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 32.

<sup>13</sup> Free Europe Press, George Minden, "Response patterns of the FEP Mailing Operation behind the Iron Curtain as of September 1958," *ibid.*, 1-2.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*



The report mentions the atmosphere of secrecy and fear in all target countries with the exception of Poland, as well as the complicated nature of the operation, with the materials being dispatched to eight countries from a dozen other countries by hundreds of sponsors who were also the first to receive the responses coming back from the target countries. Minden's perceptive analysis of the national patterns of the operations as shown by the responses received started with the three Baltic countries, all Soviet republics, where FEP faced two handicaps: the small number of addresses available and the limited knowledge of foreign languages. As such, 75% of the messages sent had to be in the language of the country. In spite of this, Minden called the results "most encouraging and, in the case of Estonia, exceptionally good." Almost 20% of the titles sent there had been confirmed by responses, compared to only 10% in the case of Latvia and Lithuania. Due to Bulgaria's very strict censorship, only 78 responses were returned, confirming the receipt of 17 titles out of more than 250 sent. On the basis of these results and of the private letters received by Bulgarians in the U.S., Minden concluded that books and even pamphlets did reach their targets, that is, Bulgarian intellectuals and professionals. He explained the meager results achieved in Romania (only some 60 responses) by the strict censorship and the general atmosphere of fear and mutual distrust prevailing throughout the country.<sup>15</sup>

On the other hand, the quality and quantity of responses received from Hungary, with messages kept to a minimum in order not to provoke the censors, was termed "highly satisfactory." In the case of Czechoslovakia, Minden noted the flow of denunciations of the book mailings in the Czech press led by *Rudé právo* and *Mladá fronta*. The materials sent were termed a "new provocative maneuver of Free Europe," a "misuse of private correspondence for propaganda purposes," and "subversive letters" which the population was asked to turn over to the authorities. Attacks by important CPCS Central Committee officials in the spring of 1957 were followed in 1958 by polemical criticisms of the émigré review *Svědectví*, Polish revisionist articles, and attacks against Djilas' book *The New Class*. The only book praised by the Czech press was Alexander Eliot's *Three Hundred Years*

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 3–7.

of *American Painting*, and books on art and music prompted the largest number of responses. On the negative side, over 100 books had been sent back as unacceptable. With some 80% of the approximately 5,000 responses received from all target countries, and 53% of the titles confirmed by responses, Poland proved to be by far the most rewarding of all mailing projects due to its large population, broader internal liberty, and the high share (40%) of the publications sent there. There were also 44 reviews in the Polish press of books, 13 of them political, sent from the West. On the basis of a detailed analysis of Polish responses, Minden called Poland unique and “a homogenous national community with high cultural potential, trying eagerly to catch up with the best cultural products of a world it belongs to in spite of present adverse circumstances, and trying at the same time to find out what other people think about Poland.” Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Estonia made up a second category, and Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, and Bulgaria a third. He optimistically concluded that, “moulded to national characteristics and changing circumstances, the Mailing Program has a good chance of succeeding completely. And since to maintain this only remaining tangible link with the outside world is the least we can do for the countries in East Europe, the difficulties we encounter from time to time should only make us redouble our effort.”<sup>16</sup> Minden proved to be a good prophet.

A year later, Minden and his staff compiled a sophisticated index of messages sent each month to Eastern Europe from March 1 to July 1, 1959. The index broke down the materials sent into twelve categories: general literature and language; religion, philosophy, history, biography, and memoirs; international affairs, politics, and law; social science; labor and education; science, technology, agriculture, and geography; economics and business; medicine and psychology, arts and architecture; children’s books, sports, fashion, and cartoons; reference books and factual reports; and catalogues and bulletins. It listed the title and destination of each message sent, with most messages falling in the first three categories. Close to 40 titles sent were in the languages of the target countries, along with the émigré magazines *The*

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 7–21. Minden also saw Poland as a potential “center of Western culture pressure” on the Soviet Union, and especially on Ukraine and Lithuania.

*Polish Review* and *Wiadomości* (Polish), *Svědectví* (Czechoslovak), and *Új Látóhatár* (Hungarian).<sup>17</sup>

At the end of a summary of the third year of the Mailing Project, from September 1958 to August 1959, Minden provided the impressive figures of approximately 130,000 books and magazines and 1,762 titles sent, and 7,000 letters of acknowledgement and 3,452 requests received. Almost 60% of the titles were European as opposed to roughly 40% American. The majority of the responses received (4,869) came from Poland, followed by Hungary. With regard to requests, those from the Baltic countries were limited to Free World publications, either written or translated by Balts. All Romanian requests came from institutions and belonged to three categories: science and technology, economics and business, and art and architecture, showing the tight control exercised by the Romanian censors. With the resumption of diplomatic relations with the U.S., Bulgarian requests were four times as numerous as the Romanian ones, and covered a larger number of categories. Czechoslovak requests also came mainly from institutions "which, thanks to our covert help are now engaged in exchange of books with their opposite numbers in the Free World." In Poland, two-thirds of the messages were going through and responses were coming in by the thousands, reflecting a state of near-normalcy. In the other countries, Minden noted "a tendency away from the platitudinous and completely noncontroversial sort of books requested at the beginning of our operation," and suggested special projects in the shape of free book bonuses and the sending of catalogues. In his view, "The pattern of requests from our target area is of some interest as a guide to our regular mailings."<sup>18</sup>

In a strictly confidential memo to FEC President Archibald Alexander, Minden noted important national differences between the East European countries, and made five short characterizations. He called Poland a major European power on a level with Spain, "a matured Quixote trying to break loose from her past, her neighbors

<sup>17</sup> Mailing Project, Index of Messages sent to Eastern Europe, March 1959 through July 1, 1959, dated August 15, 1959, 1–23.

<sup>18</sup> "A Summary of the Year September 1958–August 1959," Memorandum from G. C. Minden to the Director, FEOP dated November 24, 1959, 1–4, and "Requests: A Summing Up," September 1959.

and her hatreds—Germany and Russia—into the large world of international politics where she hopes to find both understanding and protection.” He called Hungary “nearer to the thinking and cultural life of the Western world than any other East European or Central European country,” and said the country tended toward an ideal of neutrality that may bring her closer to Austria. He described Czechoslovakia as still distrustful of the West, prosperous, and in no adventurous mood, with a passive dislike for the Russians. Romania “has fallen into a fatalistic attitude of blended despair and apathy,” while the Bulgarians “are taking reasonably good care of their country and trying to weather out their present difficulties.” He noted that the people of Eastern Europe no longer expected liberation from the West, but if given a choice, they would choose gradual liberation, with the members of the new class favoring the status quo. East-West contacts were valuable to them to the extent they could read what was published in the West, travel freely, and learn Western languages. According to Minden, the Mailing Project made it possible “to answer some of the East European requirements for general knowledge and objective information while at the same time receiving in the shape of responses to the books sent the wishes and the reactions of East European intellectuals.” He advised FEC “to prepare itself for a long and more sophisticated struggle (against communism) waged with the help of as many talented outsiders—from all the countries of the Free World—as possible.” The memo concluded that in the “thaw” years, FEC should continue to function as a center of information about and of propaganda to Eastern Europe.<sup>19</sup>

The remarkable growth of the Mailing Project between July 1956 and December 1959 was due to several factors: firstly, to the overwhelmingly positive responses from the recipients in the target countries and the unending quest for Western literature in spite of the chicaneries of the communist censors and customs authorities; secondly, to the cultural widening of the program to include, next to literature on international affairs and politics, more books and periodicals on history, sociology and religion, literature, arts and archi-

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<sup>19</sup> Memorandum from Minden to A. S. Alexander dated December 17, 1959, 1–5. HIA, George Minden Collection, Box 1.

ture, geography, language, and references books; and thirdly, to FEC's strong budgetary support. In the fiscal year 1955–1956, FEC's total budget amounted to \$14,804,864, slightly more than for 1954–1955, but less than for 1953–1954. With the onset and widening of the book mailing operations, FEC's budget for 1957–1958 rose to \$16,700,328, with \$1,676,392 going to FEP, compared to \$750,000 in 1956–57.<sup>20</sup> Last but not least, the success of the mailing project was due to the successful management of George Minden as Director of FEC's Communist Bloc Operations (CBO) Division, and later of its Press and Special Projects Division (PSPD), and the strong backing he received from FEC President John Richardson. Minden could also count on the full support of his relatively small staff of well-qualified and dedicated national editors and information analysts. An FEC office memo described Minden as “able and capable,” pointing out that “the book mailing project was proving increasingly successful, responses having been received from one of three recipients during a recent period, which was about 100% better than for the same period last year [1960].”<sup>21</sup>

The mailing project was not considered as an “organization,” but as a non-profit operation with the participation of hundreds of publishers, associations, and universities voluntarily carrying out a certain amount of activity. The targets were the thinking elites and students of Eastern Europe, and the goal “to maintain intellectual contact with East Europe through the sending of printed material to selected readerships [...] thereby to help independent thinking and to keep alive hope for an eventual return to the Western community.”<sup>22</sup> In another project summary, Minden wrote that “for centuries the written word had been the link between the two parts of Europe, and the feeling of communion with West Europe and the world at large had survived in

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<sup>20</sup> Minutes of the Board of Directors Executive Committee, December 15, 1955, and March 28, 1957. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 2322. The complete closing of the balloon launching sites in February 1958 resulted in a monthly saving of \$118,000.

<sup>21</sup> FEC Office Memo dated October 5, 1961. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 191, Folder 6. For more information on Minden's New York Book Center and its staff, see chapter 4 of this book.

<sup>22</sup> Communist Bloc Operations, Unsigned memorandum probably drafted by George Minden, February 1962, 3, *ibid*.

East Europe throughout its precarious history thanks to the circulation of books in foreign languages. Hence our decision to make books our means of communication with the Captive Nations. [...] We select our books,” he continued, “so as to attain maximum political impact with a minimum of provocation. Good literature, reference books, art books, science books, and textbooks keep our audience in touch with the intellectual and material achievements of the Free World, and have enough political substance to make them worth sending.” He described Poland and Hungary as showing “by far the greatest eagerness to participate in the cultural life of the West.” Hungarian responses “have an almost lyrical quality which makes them especially moving,” while Polish responses “are more business-like and seem to indicate that for that country the receipt of books has become a matter of routine, a part of normal intellectual life.” The summary concluded that “Starting from nil in 1956, the Mailing project has now reached a stage where it provides practically all the intellectuals and institutions in Hungary and Poland, and important sections of the reading public in the other East European countries, with the latest relevant works published in the Free World.”<sup>23</sup>

PSPD activities were also intended to complement the influence of RFE “by reaching high-leverage East European individuals and groups through books and personal contacts.” The books mailed “conveyed ideas, information, impressions, and points of view unavailable to their readers and calculated to encourage evolutionary processes toward greater freedom, democratic rights, and re-association with Western Europe. Their recipients were the East European elites who can best exercise leverage and influence in their societies—writers, economists, government officials and planners, managers, teachers, students, etc.”<sup>24</sup>

In a 12-page presentation prepared in 1969 when budgetary and other concerns arose, Minden reviewed the purpose and achievements of the book project since its beginnings. He described it as a parallel-

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<sup>23</sup> “Mailing Project: A Summary,” July 1962, 1–2. The President [FEC] to the Executive Committee, July 26, 1962. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 32.

<sup>24</sup> Minden, Addendum to “Free Europe Today,” “Other (Non-Radio) Means of Reaching East Europeans,” January 31, 1968, 1–4, *Ibid*.

printed word project complementing the work of Radio Free Europe “to provide the thinking elite of East Europe with a selection of the best, newest and most timely printed matter.” Minden listed the following seven purposes behind the operation: “1) to provide a substitute press (in a broad sense) for east Europe; 2) to help prevent [...] a communication breakdown like the one that happened in the 20s and 30s with Russia; 3) to interpret the West to east Europeans; 4) to fight boredom, irrationality, mediocrity, and provincialism—all products of an isolated society; 5) to help create an open society in which twentieth-century Europeans could exist and develop spiritually; 6) to keep east Europeans oriented toward the West, independent-minded, and friendly to America and its west European allies; 7) to show in a concrete manner the continued interest of the Free World in the intellectual and spiritual welfare of east Europeans.” A book campaign suited Eastern Europe well because of the existence of “a bi- or even tri-lingual reading public and the readers’ traditional western orientation.” The formula was a simple one, namely “to engage in a joint venture of book distribution with west European and American publishers.” Subsequently, over the years PSPD approached practically all of the western world’s publishers, most of which agreed to each send their own books. They also gave generous trade discounts, handled the packing, addressing, and mailing of the books, and collected and forwarded the responses received to the “New York-based business corporation we hired [sic] to take care of the administration of the project—the International Advisory Council.”<sup>25</sup>

Minden wrote that after receiving enough responses from Eastern Europe, after 1963 he was able to change the character of the operation:

We stopped thinking in terms of mailing lists and sending books to people who were mere names and professions. Our targets became correspondents known to us from their letters and even from their discussions with our field representatives. We opened a file for each target, with his letters and requests, the titles of

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<sup>25</sup> Minden, Director, Publications and Special Projects Division, Free Europe, Inc., “The Book Project, a Presentation,” July 18, 1969, 1–2. HIA, Minden Collection, Box 3.

books already received, relevant information on his languages and interests, clippings from local publications on his work and activities, notes on the impressions made on people met while travelling abroad. [...] The mailing of books in answer to individual requests, spontaneous or elicited by our offers, has the advantage of providing our targets with books they have chosen themselves. [...] Our editorial task could be best described as an attempt at providing each target [...] with the books he needs for his professional work, studies or mere furtherance of knowledge in his field of interest. It is this matching of books and people that is our main task. We are now providing books to close to 70,000 people and institutions in an area populated by close to 80 million people.<sup>26</sup>

Minden stated that his Division “had had a major role in helping most of the thinking elite of east Europe become familiar with every publication, author or trend of thought that has mattered in the West during these [past twelve] years,” and that “a good job had been done, and done tactfully, and that a good beginning has been made.”<sup>27</sup>

Minden’s conclusion was an eloquent plea in favor of the continuation of the book project. “East Europe has survived the worst of its ordeal without becoming alienated spiritually or intellectually from the rest of the world,” he wrote, “and we have contributed substantially to that survival. But if the battle for east Europe’s mind has not been lost, it will take years of continued work to really win it. [...] Books will be absolutely indispensable for affording Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, Rumanians, and Bulgarians an understanding in depth of the spiritual and intellectual life of the world east Europe is a natural part of, and for keeping them within the western community of

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 3 and 11. Next to praise for the enthusiasm of both publishers and field representatives, there was also a reference to “the tolerance of the east European governments themselves.” Minden also tried without success to save PSPD’s Polish, Czechoslovak, and Hungarian *New Bulletins* by asking \$35,000 for the fiscal year 1969. Memorandum from Minden to William P. Durkee, March 26, 1968, 1–4. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 191, Folder 6.



thought [...] Books should be made available to all the people who can put them to good use. The task is not beyond our means.”<sup>28</sup>

Even if he could not always obtain everything he asked for, Minden deserves much credit for never losing faith in the ultimate purpose and objectives of the book project, which had become his ultimate *raison d'être*. With the collapse of the Iron Curtain and the end of the Cold War, his vision for the future of Eastern Europe, becoming once again a part of the West, proved to be the correct one.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 11–12. Starting in the fiscal year 1971, Minden wanted to double the size of his audience to 120,000 people and institutions by 1975, and to provide them with roughly 600,000 books a year through a gradual increase of about 50,000 books a year.

## CHAPTER 4

# The New York Book Center

### *Books, Books, and More Books...*

During the long lifespan of the book project under the short directorship of Sam S. Walker Jr., and the much longer directorship of George Minden, a fairly small group of dedicated people were involved with its practical implementation in the so-called New York Book Center. Many of them have since passed away, and most of those still alive have reached a ripe age. This chapter will both reveal the identities of these unknown and unsung actors of the long ideological Cold War, and examine what their tasks were in the framework of the secret book project.

In July 1956, at the age of 25, I became the youngest member of the Hungarian section of the Press Division of the Free Europe Committee (FEC) in New York. Born in the Netherlands of Hungarian parents and educated in Paris and Geneva, I waited almost two years in Canada before getting my permanent U.S. immigration visa. Since 1951, Count István Révay (1899–1989) had been heading the Hungarian section of the Press Division, and he was looking for a young analyst who was fluent in both English and Hungarian. An MA in International Relations and the knowledge of several foreign languages, as well as no involvement in Hungarian émigré politics, were my entry cards to the FEC. Révay was a distinguished gentleman born in Czechoslovakia. He moved to Hungary in 1941, and became an MP and head of the Pál Teleki Institute in Budapest until he left Hungary in 1949. He was also an excellent violin player and even had his own small orchestra in New York. The Hungarian section comprised a number of prominent and talented individuals, all of whom had to leave Hungary

after the communist takeover and most of whom I would know and befriend for a long time to come, a few to this day. Among my new colleagues were Imre Kovács (1913–1980), a leading pre-World War II populist writer made famous by his 1937 book *A néma forradalom* (The mute revolution), and who was, after 1945, leader of the National Peasant Party until his escape from Hungary in 1947; László Varga (1910–2002), a jurist and politician who returned to Hungary in 1992 and became an MP and doyen of the National Assembly (1998–2002); Professor William (Vilmos) Juhász (1899–1967), a highly educated writer, editor, and cultural historian, with whom I would work later for almost eight years; the economist Robert Gábor (1919–), a former member of the Hungarian Social Democratic Party, who later held a high position with the AFL-CIO; the jurist György Páll (1892–1975); and the much younger István Deák (1926–) who joined the FEC in Munich in 1951, was transferred to New York in 1956, and resigned in 1959 to pursue a brilliant academic career as a historian and Columbia University professor. All of them have since passed away except Gábor and Deák, who still reside in the United States.

After the Revolution broke out in Hungary on October 23, 1956, and was quickly crushed by the Soviet army in early November, Révay assigned me to conduct in-depth interviews with a selected number of newly arrived Hungarian refugees in a Manhattan hotel. My assignment was cut short in May 1957, when the U.S. Army chose to draft me and assigned me first to the Psychological Warfare School at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, then to a tactical psychological operations unit near Stuttgart, Germany. When I returned to New York in 1959, the FEC had gone through yet another reorganization. The Hungarian press section no longer existed, and Révay had been terminated (he moved to Austria in 1967) together with all my former colleagues but one. The lone survivor was William Juhász, who was now in charge of the Hungarian section of a new and very secret book project launched in the second half of the 1950s. When Deák decided to leave for Columbia University, Juhász asked me to become his assistant. He took me to the office of a man I had never met before, George Minden. The division was located on the 26<sup>th</sup> floor of 2 Park Avenue in Manhattan, one floor above the offices of the Radio Free Europe staff members, which ensured minimal contacts between the two groups. From 1960 to 1974, I thus became a member of the small

group of people working full time to select and mail Western and émigré books and periodicals to the eight targeted East European and Baltic countries, and to report in great detail on the responses and requests received from these countries. Next to George Minden, who managed the book project for some 32 years, a number of my former colleagues also worked with him until the New York Book Center was closed in 1991. Alongside him, they went through three successive name changes and one physical move, but the basic objective always remained the same, namely to send or directly distribute as many good Western books as possible, and to analyze and report on the results, which would then be forwarded to the president of FEC and through him to the Executive Committee, and later directly to Washington.

Following the disclosure of the covert CIA financing of the Free Europe Committee and RFE/RL, a new financial arrangement was worked out with the U.S. Government, which included the termination of all of FEC's non-radio activities. The magazine *East Europe*, which was also part of Minden's Press and Special Projects Division (PSPD), was discontinued and its employees reassigned or terminated. At the end of 1970, the staff members involved with the book project received a letter signed by the President of Free Europe, Inc., informing them that: "On January 16, 1971, the functions of the Publications Division of Free Europe, Inc. and your employment will be assumed by the International Advisory Council, Inc., a separate corporation. Your employment with Free Europe Inc. will terminate January 15, 1970."<sup>1</sup> Ultimately, 19 of the 28 employees involved with the book project, including George Minden, became employees of the new organization,

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from William P. Durkee dated December 30, 1970. The recipients were offered the choice between receiving or not receiving a severance pay for their Free Europe employment through January 15, 1971. Author's copy and HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Microfiche Provisional Box 3. As shown by the frequent exchange of letters, it took two years of complex negotiations between the FEC president and the U.S. Government to work out all the financial details of the separation. A cash fund was set up by "our former sponsors in the U.S. Government [sic] to cover Free Europe Inc.'s liquidation expenses," which totaled \$437,000. Free Europe, Inc. President William P. Durkee to Richard W. Murray, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Budget and Finance, Department of State, Washington, D.C., December 13, 1971, *ibid.*

with Minden as its president, and moved from the 26<sup>th</sup> floor at 2 Park Avenue to a new office almost across the street on the 14<sup>th</sup> floor of a much higher building at 475 Park Avenue South. Dr. Oton Ambroz (1905–1994), a noted Slovenian scholar, journalist, and expert on China who came to the U.S. and joined the FEC in 1959, remained behind. So did two young and attractive assistants of Minden, Adele Idestrom (1939–) and Annette Lust (1942–), who both left FEC in 1971 to pursue their own successful careers.

*The IAC/ILC staff.* The office door of the extremely security-conscious Minden was always closed, and his very efficient secretary, Rebecca Lief (1917–2011) made sure he would not be disturbed. Rebecca remarried and took the name of Levine, and retired in 1991 when the book project was terminated. Like her boss, she did not wish to discuss the project with me, although she must have known enough to write her own book. Those who worked directly for our division chief included Lilian (Lilly) Walsh (1919–?), a very diligent lady born in Germany, who was part of the management team and acted as Minden’s administrative assistant. She ordered all the books needed for all our projects. In 1982, she retired and moved to Zurich, Switzerland, where she continued to work discreetly for Minden until 1990 as a book mailer and contact person with Swiss bookstores. There was Peter Beales, born in London in 1935, a very polite and elegantly dressed young Englishman, who edited our reports and statistics needed for Minden’s detailed monthly, bi-monthly, annual, and later semi-annual reports on book distribution. Beales passed away in New York sometime before 1985. Finally, there was the ever-needed accountant, Carmine (Lou) Bianco (1925–2009), who had the ungrateful task of handling the budget and making sure it stayed within the limits set by the donors “down south.” Only this small group of close co-workers was privy to any information Minden chose to share with them. There was also a book and mail room located further down the street at 386 Park Avenue South, Room 1208, with two brave and untiring men, Bulgarian-born Peter Raikov (1907–1980) and Myron Maslowycz (1933–1992), who was of Ukrainian descent. Both hired by FEC in 1957, they received the ordered books, packed and labeled them amidst a towering mountain of boxes, and directed them to various Manhattan post offices for shipment overseas. I also want to

remember an earlier PSPD member, the Hungarian Árpád Négyessy (1911–1985), who resigned from FEC in 1966 to pursue a teaching career in Vermont.

PSPD and its successors after 1970 had five national sections, each under a national editor/plan advisor. In order of importance, the Polish section came first, followed by the Czechoslovak, the Hungarian, the Romanian, and the Bulgarian. PSPD also had two part-time Baltic advisors, the veteran journalist Evald Rosaare (1915–1983) for Estonia, who left New York to join the Estonian Service of the Voice of America in Washington D.C., and Alfred Berzins (1899–1977), a former analyst, editor, and part-time consultant for Latvia. After the end of the Baltic book program in 1970, Minden continued for a while to help Berzins to mail books to Latvia by providing books, postage, and office space.

The Polish section was certainly the busiest one, in terms of the number of publications sent to Poland and distributed to Polish visitors to the West, as well as in terms of letters of acknowledgement and requests received from the many American and European sponsors of the book program. The national plans advisor for Poland was a most remarkable man, the dedicated and tireless Adam Rudzki. Born in 1901 in St. Petersburg, the son of a doctor, he joined the nascent Polish army in 1919 and in 1920 fought in defense of Warsaw against the Bolsheviks. After graduating in Economics from the University of Poznań, he worked for the Port Authority of Gdańsk/Danzig, then a free city under joint Polish and German administration, becoming port executive director in 1937. He eluded the Germans in 1939 and through Latvia and Paris reached London, where he worked for the Polish government-in-exile. In 1951, Rudzki emigrated to New York and joined FEC in 1952, becoming Polish plans advisor for Free Europe Operations (FEOP) in 1959 and for PSPD afterwards. From the inception of the book project, he was responsible for all aspects of the Polish operation—finding sponsors, mailing, cooperating with Polish publishers, mainly in France and England, and organizing person-to-person distribution points, always finding new ways to send books—for some 30 years. He enjoyed the absolute trust of Minden, who did not speak Slavic languages, and he handled fairly independently and most successfully the various Polish programs, regularly visiting his numerous Polish book distributors and sponsors in Western

Europe. The energetic Rudzki never retired and died on the job in 1987 in New York.<sup>2</sup> His assistant and successor for the next few years, Chris (Zdzisław) Gremski, had mainly administrative duties, while Minden took over and visited Rudzki's many Polish contacts and distribution centers in Europe. The staff of the closely-knit and very efficient Polish section consisted of Marta Elżbieta Jaworska (1907–?), who joined FEC in 1950 as a staff assistant, and afterwards became a senior information analyst. She typed addresses for the Polish mailing project and returned to Poland in the 1990s. There was Barbara Vedder, today Swiderski (1924–), who was in charge of the preparation of statistics and retired in the U.S., and Zarema Bau (1913–2008), wife of the celebrated Polish journalist and war correspondent Zdzisław Bau, who started working for Minden in 1966 and left in 1974 to join the Józef Piłsudski Institute in New York.

The first Czechoslovak PSPD section head was Jan Stránský (1913–1998), who was followed by Pavel Tigrid (1907–2003), a prominent Czechoslovak journalist and politician. When Tigrid left for France in 1959, he was succeeded by William (Vilem) Brzorad, who remained national editor for Czechoslovakia throughout the entire book program. Born in 1911 in Jinonice, a suburb of Prague, he earned a law degree in the 1930s from Prague's Charles University, and in 1945 became personal secretary to the Czechoslovak Secretary of Foreign Trade, Hubert Ripka. Following the February 1948 communist takeover in Prague, he defected in Rome and later emigrated to the U.S. Brzorad worked for the Library of Congress in Washington

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<sup>2</sup> Information provided by Adam Rudzki's son Marek Rudzki (1929–), a retired economist in New York, in letters to the author dated August 12, 2010, and August 15, 2010. In 1954, Adam Rudzki also wrote several studies on transportation, railroads, highways, and seaports in Captive Europe for the Mid-European Studies Center in New York. For more details on the Polish aspects of the book project, see Jan Nowak-Jeziorański-Jerzy Giedroyc, *Listy 1952–1998* [Books 1952–1998] (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 2001). Giedroyc (1906–2000), of *Kultura* in Paris, was one of the most important Polish book publishers and distributors. His correspondence is deposited in Institut Littéraire at Maisons-Laffitte, Paris. According to Gremski, he was ordered by Minden to destroy some files but preserved the Polish letters. Marek Rudzki to the author. The missing Minden reports from July 1973 to September 1991 have still not been located.

D.C., before joining the FEC and its PSP Division, with responsibility for the Czechoslovak book mailing and person-to-person distribution program. Together with Adam Rudzki, he co-edited the magazine *Central European Federalist*, collaborated closely with Tigris in Paris, and was in contact with Czechoslovak dissidents. Václav Havel visited him in his Port Washington, N.Y. home in the 1960s. After 1989, Brzorad planned to return to Prague, but he died in Port Washington in 1995.<sup>3</sup>

The rock and pillar of the Czechoslovak section was the stunningly beautiful Zdena Horak (1926–), who escaped in 1948 from communist-ruled Czechoslovakia by making a 200-yard dash (she lost a shoe) across the Czech–West German border to rejoin her husband. They arrived in the U.S. in 1951 and Horak joined FEP's Czechoslovak section the following year. She was assigned to work on the balloon project, and afterwards the mailing project. One day, Sam Walker asked her and another Czech lady to label and prepare in his New York apartment the very first batch of 300 envelopes for letters to be sent as a "pilot project" to Czechoslovakia. She never found out what was mailed in those envelopes. As Zdena recently recalled, "We were also preparing a comprehensive mailing system (addresses of institutions and organizations for Czechoslovakia) to be stored in the new computer. This machine was a monster occupying the whole room, with a young technician at its site."<sup>4</sup> After working throughout the entire book program, Zdena Horak retired in 1985 and now lives in Florida. She is the widow of the late Dr. Jiří Horak (1924–2003), professor of government for 30 years at Manhattan College in New York, and first chairman (1990–1992) of the restored Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party. Another member of the section was Dr. William Pauliny (1910–1995), born in Stamford, CT. He worked together with Brzorad on the book project in the PSPD, and he took an early retirement in 1972. Others who on a part-time basis helped the mailing project while it was still part of PSPD were Marta Zverina and Anna Bednar.

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<sup>3</sup> Courtesy of Mrs. Olga Brzoradová in Rataje nad Sázavou, Czech Republic, July 24, 2010. Brzorad's daughter Nina was a talented ballet dancer in New York and later a ballet master at the National Theatre Ballet in Prague.

<sup>4</sup> Zdena Horak to the author, February 11, 2011, and April 10, 2011.



From the start, Minden's Hungarian national plans advisor was Dr. William (Vilmos) Juhász. Born in 1899, he earned a Ph.D. in Hungarian Literature and Cultural History at the University of Szeged in 1933. Juhász then worked as a journalist and as a reader for various Budapest publishers, took part in the founding of the Catholic periodical *Vigilia* in 1935, and after the war became its co-editor with Sándor Sik. A prolific author, he published many books on cultural and literary history, and translated a number of Western authors into Hungarian. In 1945–1946, he taught comparative cultural history at the University of Szeged, and was the editor of the two-volume *Révai Lexikon*. In 1949, Juhász escaped from Hungary, and was the editor of the *Katolikus Szemle* (Catholic review) in Rome from 1949 to 1951. He emigrated to the U.S. in 1951 and joined the Press Division of FEC. He also taught Hungarian literature and cultural history at the University of Columbia and authored over ten books, some of which were translated into English. A man of encyclopedic knowledge and considerable energy, he worked untiringly to enhance and diversify the Hungarian book project until his retirement and early death in 1967.<sup>5</sup>

After working as Juhász's assistant since 1960, I served as Hungarian national plans advisor from 1967 to 1974, when I moved to Washington D.C. to pursue an academic career. The staff of the Hungarian section consisted of the following ladies, who worked for many years with great enthusiasm and dedication to make the Hungarian book program a success: Mária Ugron Podhorszky, born

<sup>5</sup> On Vilmos Juhász, see *Magyar Életrajzi Lexikon 1000–1990* [Hungarian Biographical Encyclopedia 1000–1990], with a list of his works published in Hungary; István Barankovics, *Juhász Vilmos emlékezete* [In Memory of Vilmos Juhász] (New York: Hungarian National Committee, 1968). See also Sándor Sik and Vilmos Juhász, eds., *A szeretet breváriuma* [The breviary of love] (Budapest: Orpheus, 1994). Other works include *Blueprint for a Red Generation* (New York: Mid-European Studies Center, 1952), *The Development of Catholicism in Hungary in Modern Times* (New York: Arts, Inc., 1953), and *Bartók Béla amerikai évei* [Béla Bartók's American years] (New York: Hungarian National Committee, 1956), published in English by Occidental Press, Washington, D.C., in 1981. With Abraham Rothberg (1922–2011), he co-edited *Flashes in the Night: A Collection of Stories from Contemporary Hungary* (New York: Random House, 1958). He also edited *Hungarian Social Science Reader (1945–1963)* (Munich: Heller and Molnár, 1965).

Ugron de Ábránfalva (1906–1987), who joined the FEC in 1958 and retired in the early 1970s. She moved back to Salzburg, Austria, where her husband György Podhorszky had died in 1950. Vera Szadeczky (1909–1993) was born in Budapest, joined the FEC in 1959, and worked with the book program until her retirement in 1974. Our senior information analyst Etelka Halász (1927–) left Hungary with her husband and their three-year-old son in 1956, arrived in the U.S. in 1957, and started to work first part-time, then full-time for FEC's PSPD. Following my resignation in 1974, Halász was put in charge of the Hungarian project. She earned a BA in Psychology at City College of New York and an MA in Library Science at Columbia University. In 1975, Halász left the book program to work as a librarian, and in 2004 she retired from the Tenafly, N.J. Public Library. During the remaining years of the book project, William Brzorad was assigned the Hungarian person-to-person project and Zdena Horak the Hungarian mailing project. Minden asked Gyula Gombos from Free Europe, Inc. to be a freelance advisor for Hungary, and the latter would come over once a week for a few hours to meet Minden and Brzorad and to help Horak to successfully continue the Hungarian mailing project.<sup>6</sup>

The Romanian national plan advisor throughout the FEC-PSPD and IAC-ILC years was the cheerful and friendly Ioana (Nana) Alimanestianu, born Fulga in 1927 in Bucharest. She studied at the Bucharest University Law School from 1945 to 1946, and married her husband Mihai, a civil and mechanical engineer and brilliant inventor, when she was 19. They escaped from communist Romania in 1947 and Ioana studied at the University of Geneva in 1947–1948. She joined FEC in 1957 and started working on the book mailing project in the same year, typing addresses from the Romanian telephone book. In 1971, she became a senior information analyst. Her life changed dramatically when in 1989, Mihai perished with all 171 passengers when the plane he was flying from Brazzaville to Paris exploded over the Niger desert due to an act of terrorism attributed to Libya's ruler Muammar Quaddafi.<sup>7</sup> Alimanestianu is the mother of four children, and her daughter Joanna (1950–) also worked on the Romanian book

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<sup>6</sup> Horak to the author, September 26, 2010, and October 9, 2007.

<sup>7</sup> Obituary of Mihai Alimanestianu in *The New York Times*, September 23, 1989.

project as a freelancer in the late 1960s. Other Romanian staff members were three somewhat older and very friendly, charming ladies: Stefana Cantacuzino, née Golescu (1907–2000), born in Bucharest,<sup>8</sup> and her sister Despina Hodos (1905–1993), both of whom joined FEC in 1950 and worked diligently throughout the book project. They were assisted by Sonia Bunescu (1899–1993), a still active freelancer who left Romania in 1947. She was married to Alexandru Bunescu (1895–1979), a former Romanian industrialist, politician, and member of the Romanian National Committee in New York. For a short time, Marius Magureanu (1923–1993) was also part of the Romanian PSPD team before being transferred to the Romanian desk of RFE in 1970.

The smaller Bulgarian national section, consisting only of the national plan advisor, underwent several personnel changes throughout the years. Its first head, the easy-going Sofia-born George Damien, alias Tosho Damyanoff (1914–?), was transferred to the Bulgarian desk of RFE and terminated in 1974. His successor, the friendly and good-humored Dragomir (Drago) Nenoff (1911–1985) left in 1971 to join the Bulgarian desk of RFE in Munich, where he passed away. The last Bulgarian editor was the pretty Lilly M. Tussusov (1924–), who left the book project in 1975 and still resides in New York. After her departure, Iona Alimanestianu was assigned the Bulgarian mailing and person-to-person distribution projects.

Minden also had an important book distributor in New York in the person of the Hungarian-born George Lowy, who since his emigration to the U.S. had worked for 18 years as a librarian in Columbia University's Butler Library. He earned a Ph.D. and joined the faculty of the School of International Affairs, and in 1985 joined the Pratt Institute in New York, where he served as Provost until his retirement in 1991. Lowy's and his colleague Alajos Papp's task was to distribute selected Western and émigré books to East European scholars and researchers visiting Columbia University, who were only too eager to take back with them as many publications as possible. When the books' number and weight exceeded the capacity of their luggage, they were mailed to them to Eastern Europe.

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<sup>8</sup> The Cantacuzino family is an old aristocratic boyar family of Wallachia and Moldavia, a branch of the Greek Kantakouzinos family allegedly descended from John VI Cantacuzene, Byzantine Emperor (1347–1353).

The IAC President ran a pretty centralized office and expected from his staff the same efficiency and discretion as he himself displayed. Cooperation between the national desks, with three or four individuals each, was routinely smooth and correct, free of the frictions common among émigrés. I would stress that staff relations were characterized by a strong spirit of camaraderie in which teamwork prevailed and differences based on ethnic origin, nationality, or religion were inexistent. We all worked for a common cause and shared the same ideals and goals, namely to get as many books and periodicals as possible to as many individuals and institutions as possible behind the Iron Curtain. As one of the survivors of that period, I can attest that all those named in this chapter never had to be told what to do and always knew how important their work was even if we did not know how long it would last.

*Tasks of the New York Book Center.* How did the New York Book Center function? Based on my own experience and observations of some 15 years, and for practical reasons, I would like to start with the output. By the time I joined the book project in 1960, some three-and-half years after its inception, its functioning was a well-organized and routine affair. It was a fairly centralized operation entirely in the hands of George Minden. This was even more the case after 1970, when he was dealing directly with our undisclosed government sponsor without having to go through the intermediary of the president and board of directors of Free Europe, Inc. Each national section functioned in very much the same manner and followed a similar division of labor. Chosen from publishers' catalogues from all over the U.S., England, France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and from time to time from Italy and Spain, the books selected for review would flow into our offices non-stop and were distributed among the various national editors. Books in national languages and émigré books would go to the relevant national plans advisor for his or her valuation. Minden himself must have reviewed some of the incoming books but delegated most of this task to William Juhász, because of the latter's encyclopedic knowledge and vast experience as an editor. Thus, incoming books would pile up every day on his desk, and the two of us would sit down and go through the pile, with Juhász browsing through the books and giving me his opinions in Hungarian, which I transcribed into English and

put inside each book. Seldom would Juhász not recommend a book and his evaluations, based on his knowledge of many authors and their reputation, were absolutely correct. He was a rapid reader and within a few hours, had gone through the pile and the books were sent back to Minden's office for final approval.

Once approved for mailing, person-to-person distribution, or both, each book received an inside slip listing the targeted East European countries, and began to make the rounds of the various national editors, starting with Poland, the largest and most important target country. Then came Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria, and for a while the three Baltic countries. Minden based the number of books to be distributed to each country on that country's actual population, and he did not fail to include this in his various reports. Thus Poland, with a population percentage of 37%, always received over 30%, usually between 31–32% or more, of all the books distributed. Czechoslovakia, with its 16.9% population percentage, would receive between 19% and 23% of the books distributed. Hungary, with a 12.1% population percentage, would usually receive special treatment with roughly 21–22% of the books sent, while Romania, with its larger 23.2% population percentage, would get around 16% of the books, and Bulgaria, with its 9.9% population percentage, would get between 5% to 6% of all books distributed.<sup>9</sup> In practice, this system worked in the following manner: when the Czechoslovak and the Hungarian editors got a selected book, of which Rudzki selected say 80 or 100 copies for Poland, they already knew the approximate number of copies they would be expected to schedule. In most cases, the chosen numbers were not altered by Minden. Paperbacks were sent in larger numbers, and expensive books, such as art books or encyclopedias, in smaller numbers. Books focusing on a particular country, and books written in a particular language, were notable exceptions. Thus, more French books were distributed to Romania than to Hungary, which, on the other hand, received more books in German than for instance Bulgaria. Émigré books published in various East European languages, most of them in Polish, many in Czech and Hungarian, and also some

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<sup>9</sup> George C. Minden, undated IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, July 1 to December 31, 1971, 10. HIA, Minden Collection, Box 1. There were always slight variations between each half-year.

in Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian, were left at the discretion of the national plans advisors. I recall that in case of doubt, we would ask for the opinion of one or more outside experts, such as Gyula Gombos or Péter Halász from the Hungarian RFE desk, or the free-lancer Imre Kovács. This was a must because many, if not most, émigré authors wanted their books published with PSPD/IAC support and then distributed through our book distribution program.

With the number of copies established, the next step was the determination of the book recipients. For the books to be mailed, it was logical to send a law book to lawyers or law libraries, an art book to painters, books on architecture to architects, medical books to doctors and psychologists, books on religion to clergymen and religious institutions, language books and dictionaries to teachers and students, and so on. More controversial books would be sent to members of the communist party and government elite, university and other libraries, and selected journalists.

As the number of acknowledgement and request letters began to rise, national plans advisors began setting up their own individual name cards and correspondence files for each recipient, kept in alphabetical order. These included the names, address, and occupation of the individual recipient, the foreign language he or she was fluent in, and his or her fields of interest. This information was first gathered from telephone directories obtained through U.S. government channels, and also from the newspapers and periodicals obtained from Eastern Europe, and later, from the returned slips accompanying the various lists of gift books sent on which the recipients were asked to write down their occupation, particular field(s) of interest, and recommend other persons wishing to receive books. This method proved to be most effective and allowed the mailers to make the optimal selection when selecting recipients for a given book, creating a quasi-personal relationship with them. Over the years, the individual files grew to an impressive size and contained tens of thousands of letters from individuals and institutions from all target countries. The selected recipients' mailing addresses were then typed up, either on labels provided by the publishers themselves, or on those printed by IAC. In the case of mailings from Europe, the lists of addresses were sent to the book publishers participating in the program. In turn, both American and European mailers sent the responses and requests they received from Eastern Europe to IAC.

With the help of this very personal and precise data base, it was possible to send the right book to the right person, and the ladies who were doing the selection became real experts at that task, with the addressees often wondering how the unknown sender knew of their particular field of interest. Once approved by the national plan advisor, each title selected for distribution was given a number, starting with a P for Poland, a C for Czechoslovakia, an H for Hungary, and so on. This number was also entered on the addressee's individual card. The lists of addresses were then sent to our various American and West European "sponsors," existing publishers and bookstores, or fictitious organizations managed by individuals fully trusted by Minden. The sponsors would then label and ship the books to their assigned destination. For the sake of speed and expediency, some U.S. publishers would also supply their labels to the IAC to be addressed and affixed on the parcel before it was shipped. I rarely visited the book and mail room down the street, but judging from the very large number of American books sent from New York, the two men working there always had their hands full. At some point, the New York Post Office even investigated the mailing project because the same registry number was being used for as many as 500 parcels a month, when users of the international registry system did not use it more than once in any three-month period. The covert donor explained that "It would be a very easy matter for the postal system in an unfriendly country to associate a certain registry number appearing on several packages with one shipper, and it would certainly indicate some kind of an operation especially if a variety of return addresses are used."<sup>10</sup>

With regard to books scheduled for person-to-person distribution, the relevant slip indicated how many copies should go to each of the book distributors in West Europe. The same procedure was followed for books or periodicals published in Europe and already approved by Minden and the relevant national plans advisor, *Kultura* in Paris

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<sup>10</sup> Letter of the Executive Committee to The President [Free Europe, Inc.] dated February 7, 1962. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records. The CIA explained the aims of the mailing project to the Chief Postal Inspector in Washington and the head of the International Service Division, and suggested that the FEC should deal in the matter with the Deputy Postal Inspector in New York.



was supposed to mail a certain number of copies of its magazine by the same name to the various Polish distribution points, and the same applied to *Új Látóhatár* in Munich, *Sveděctví* in London, or *Magyar Híradó* in Vienna. When the stock of books of a given distributor started to be depleted, usually after the busy summer tourist season, he or she would ask Minden to replenish the near empty shelves, such as happened a few times with the Romanian Carol I Foundation in Paris or Interpress Ltd. in London. Some trusted distributors such as Peter Straka in Vienna were also able to recommend and purchase particular books, in this case in the German language, and key Polish distributors in London and Paris were most probably able to do the same.

In sum, our New York office could be aptly described as being at the center of a huge international spider web, with many successive circles encompassing many areas and persons in the U.S. and in Western and Eastern Europe. The further away one would get from this center, the more difficult it became to locate and identify it, which was exactly what the extremely security-conscious Minden and his equally discreet U.S. government sponsors wanted.

*The responses.* Such a vast number of mailings were most certain to generate a return flow of letters from recipients, which were divided into the following categories: letters acknowledging receipt of one or more books, acknowledgement letters requesting the mailing of another book, offered or not, and so-called individual request letters, in which the writer asked the sending of a particular title. The acknowledgement letters, collected from the project's many sponsors and sent in batches to the IAC's address in New York until 1970, were forwarded to Minden by Ethel Schroeder and sorted by the various national sections. Each letter would be marked with the project number of the book title being acknowledged, and this number was also circled on the recipient's personal card. This made it possible for each section to know exactly how many copies of each title had been acknowledged, which recipients had acknowledged them, and how many had not. With the growing number of book requests, our Hungarian ladies became quite strict and started to "punish" those addressees who were remiss in acknowledging the books sent. Eventually, the lists were pruned of perennially inactive addresses to make room for the increasingly large number of new correspondents.



After the letters were processed and the titles of the requested books had been noted, the letters were filed in individual folders, starting with the most prominent recipients. These letters may have been destroyed, but I have preserved a number of envelopes from Hungary, many of them sent with beautiful stamps on them.

It was an amazing sight to see all those letters pouring in on a daily basis from every one of our target countries, and to read their contents and share the feelings and comments of their writers. Some letters were cautious or matter-of-fact, while others were frank and even critical of conditions under the communist regime. To express their gratitude, many recipients would put beautiful stamps on their letters (much coveted by some stamp collectors “down south”), or send moving Christmas cards to our various sponsors. When the number of names and letters reached the thousands and became too large to be handled individually, alphabetic folders had to be opened to accommodate, for example, the growing number of students or teachers asking for books. The offered and accepted books were shipped directly by the sponsors in the U.S. and in Western Europe, while the so-called unsolicited or spontaneous requests required the approval of Minden himself. Each national plans advisor would compile his own list of book titles and requesters and then go in person to Minden’s office to show the list. This was a delicate affair and often depended on the mood of our division director. I entered his office after my Polish and Czech colleagues had already tried his patience with many requests, and thus many of the Hungarian requests were crossed off. I then followed the advice of my colleagues by resubmitting these same requests a few weeks later, when they were approved.

*Statistics and reports.* At the end of each month, the statistics were the final product of our Book Center operations. Each national plans advisor had to prepare a monthly report containing the following information: the number of acknowledgement letters and request letters received; the number of special requests; and, perhaps most importantly, excerpts from the most interesting letters received from the target country. Reviews of books sent by us that appeared in East European journals, and even promises of reviews also had to be mentioned. In addition, national plans advisors had to process the monthly reports of their various national book distributors, containing

the number of books and periodicals they had distributed to visitors. These reports also included, when it was known, the occupation of the visitors and the names of the most prominent visitors. At first initials were used, but by the 1960s the important visitors were identified by name despite some cautionary warnings in that regard. The national plans advisor was to combine all these data and reports into one single monthly report and to submit it to Minden by the end of each month. Peter Beales' task was to edit these national reports, which, combined with an array of statistics, included the list by title of all books scheduled for each target country for mailing and person-to-person, a list of the same books by categories, as well as a list of the prominent visitors and important institutions and periodicals who received or acknowledged books sent. Because of Minden's emphasis on security and secrecy, Peter did not show his final product to the editors, who could not check and correct any spelling errors in their respective languages. National accents on East European names began to appear in the 1970s. We also never saw the statistics and reports for the so-called personalized mailings nor the names of the American professors and researchers who took and afterwards mailed books at IAC's expenses to the contacts they had made in Eastern Europe.

Starting in 1967, Minden switched to bi-monthly reports and one thick annual report. After the separation from FEC, he prepared even more detailed semi-annual reports for the CIA—the last one available at the Hoover Institution Archives is 83 pages long—which also included for each target country the titles used for select scheduled and personalized mailings, person-to-person-distribution, mailings on requests, and the use of the gift books received from the USIA or Simon & Schuster. This minutest reporting was probably needed to ensure that he would receive the necessary funds to keep the book project going. It was only in the Hoover Institution Archives that I was able to read and analyze the contents of these detailed monthly, bi-monthly, annual, and semi-annual reports, in which my own reports on Hungarian activities were always preceded by the reports on Poland and Czechoslovakia, and followed by the reports on Romania, Bulgaria, and, until 1970, the Baltic countries. We were not privy to any documents or figures concerning the PSPD and IAC budget, and Minden's private correspondence also remained a well-kept secret to the very end. It was most probably destroyed together with all national

project files when the book project was terminated in 1991. We were aware of Minden's meetings with the top officials of the FEC and his occasional trips to Washington to secure the needed support and funds from the donor "down south." This would also explain why he seldom if ever smiled and at times seemed somber and preoccupied. On the other hand, he never showed any signs of discouragement. In retrospect, one cannot but admire Minden's ability and perseverance in successfully managing for over three decades a most complex and often risky enterprise, involving so many individuals of diverse nationalities in such a large number of foreign countries. Personally, I only regret that the fate of the tens of thousands of original letters we received from Eastern Europe has not been clarified to this day. They may well have been shredded or burned by Minden himself, or put in boxes and preserved in some U.S. government warehouse together with the many reports Minden sent to Washington throughout the years.

## CHAPTER 5

# The Book Project Reaches New Heights

*The Golden Age of the 1960s*

Although no monthly reports for the years 1960 through 1962 (except for October 1961) were found among the Minden Papers at the Hoover Institution Archives, a number of FEP office memos and a draft summary from 1962 prepared by Minden that includes annual and cumulative totals help fill the gap. The worsening of the international situation in 1959–1960 did not influence the book mailing project; nor had the fiscal measures against gift parcels in Poland been extended to books.

A few preserved monthly reports by PSPD's national editors reported a "real bursting of the dam" in Hungary, with a growing number of individuals and institutions seeking spontaneous contacts with the West. There was great interest in books on Western philosophy, theatre, modern art and architecture, and English, German, and French encyclopedias, while interest in international affairs and economics was relatively small. Even a fanatic communist professor of history at the University of Budapest asked for books on American history for his students, and the journals *Nagyvilág* (Wide world) and *Földrajzi Értesítő* (Geographic review) published reviews of books sent by PSPD.<sup>1</sup> In Poland, there was considerable interest in economic, social, and labor problems, as well as problems of European integration. There was a great demand for books on literature, particularly

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<sup>1</sup> Free Europe Committee, Inc., memos from W. Juhász to G. C. Minden dated February 26, 1960, 1–3, and March 1961, 1–5. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 1738.

from the U.S. and England. Books in Polish about literature and literary criticism, as well as about activities of Polish groups abroad, were always in greatest demand, especially the Polish translations of Gaëtan Picon's *Panorana des idées contemporaines*, Dr. Zhivago, *Rocznik Polonii* (Yearbook of the Poles abroad), and the English-Polish dictionary published by the Kosciuszko Foundation. Demands for Polish books, both original works and translations, amounted roughly to 50%–60% of all requests from Poland. Under a special arrangement, 420 books of a highly political nature (Czesław Miłosz, Milovan Djilas, etc.) selected and sponsored by FEC were inserted into shipments by the French Library to 70 libraries in Poland.<sup>2</sup> In October 1961, Minden noted: "It seems that the traditional Central European respect for 'serious books' continues to prevail in Poland and Hungary, the two countries of the 'cultural millennium.'" <sup>3</sup> While the number of books sent remained constant, twice as many responses as during the previous year came in. With requests averaging 900 a month, it now became possible to learn about the audience's needs and preferences, and to create a new mailing project based on these new requests. Hungary firmly established herself on an equal footing with Poland, with three responses for every four books sent. The results of the Czechoslovak exchange programs of technical books were satisfactory, and Romania, Bulgaria, and the Baltic countries fared much better than in the preceding year, while not reaching a satisfactory level of activity because of rigid censorship. Among Poles and Hungarians, there was a vivid interest in general literature, the humanities, the arts, and reference books, indicating their eagerness to participate in the cultural life of the Free World. With regard to the respondents, institutions continued to form the majority in all countries with the exception of Hungary (17% versus 84% for Romania, 78% for Czechoslovakia, 69% for Poland, and 37% for Bulgaria). Minden also felt the need to increase

<sup>2</sup> Memos from Leslaw Bodenski to G. Minden dated March 1, 1960, 1–2, and April 1, 1961, 1, and FEC Highlight Items, December 7, 1962, *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Fiscal year 1961 first quarter survey Memo by G. C. Minden to R. W. Minton, October 27, 1960, 1–5. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Microfiche Provisional Box 3.

the share of translated materials to be able to reach the larger masses of readers.<sup>4</sup>

As of October 31, 1961, a cumulative total of 9,279 titles had been sent in 803,874 copies to the target countries since July 1956, eliciting a total number of 55,276 responses, most of them from Poland (32,334) and Hungary (16,469), with Czechoslovakia a distant third (3,156). In October 1961, however, 852 requests came in from Hungary, compared to 579 from Poland. A breakdown of messages sent according to book categories showed that 18.5% were on international affairs, politics, and law, 15.6% on religion, philosophy, and history, and 14.8% on general literature and language. As for the breakdown of requests, 35.6% fell in the category of general literature and language, and 19.7% in that of art and architecture. The 153 titles mailed in 5,000 copies in October 1961 included works by Saul Bellow, Ernest Hemingway, Jacques Maritain, André Maurois, Herbert Read, and Simone Weil, several English and French dictionaries and world atlases, and R. R. Bowker's *Books in Print, 1960* and *Subject Guide to Books in Print, 1960*. Five books were in Polish, one in Latvian, and one in Hungarian, namely *Korunk szellemi körképe*, a translation of *Panorama des idées contemporaines*. A selection of gift books in an English and a French version printed by the International Advisory Council mailed to Hungary offered two free books to recipients and their friends, with 40 titles on the English version and 35 titles on the French one to choose from.<sup>5</sup>

Throughout the entire mailing project, the offer of free gift books was particularly successful. In 1960, the American Legation in Budapest reported that many Hungarian intellectuals had received cards from the International Advisory Council, Inc. in New York, listing 25 books with a choice of any two books as a gift from the

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<sup>4</sup> Fiscal year 1961 first quarter survey Memo by G. C. Minden to R. W. Minton, October 27, 1960, 1–5, and a two-page list dated October 28, 1957, of books already translated and books in the works (five to Poland totaling 5,800 copies and one to Hungary in 1,000 copies), with Gaëtan Picon's *Panorama des idées contemporaines* both in Polish and in Hungarian translation. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Microfiche Provisional Box 3.

<sup>5</sup> COB Division, Mailing Operations, Monthly Report, No. 63, October 1961, 1–43, *ibid*.

Council. Many recipients did order books, but some did not receive their gifts and believed that the “postal authorities” had blocked their reply or that the books had been confiscated upon arrival in Hungary. The Legation dispatch concluded that “The Hungarians getting the Council’s card appear to be quite pleased that a group in the West is interested in sending them books. In spite of Russian and regime propaganda to the contrary, many Hungarian intellectuals still look to the West for inspiration.”<sup>6</sup> In fact, for Hungarian intellectuals the book project became one of the main forms of contact with the Free World. The number of requests for books in English and in French showed a steady increase as compared to books in German. No less than 17 reviews of books mailed, including several American ones, appeared in literary magazines such as *Kortárs*, *Helikon*, and *Nagyvilág*, the sociological monthly *Valóság*, and the Catholic monthly *Vigília*. Many respondents stressed the value of the language books sent for the teaching of English or for writing an English Reader for Hungarian high schools. Hungarian prelates attending the Vatican Council in Rome were highly pleased with the books they kept receiving from European and American publishers. Upon receiving Sidney Hook’s latest book, a Hungarian high school teacher boldly wrote back directly to the author: “What clear, true words! Of course, there are places where those thoughts are taboo [...] dangerous themes—especially for a teacher.”<sup>7</sup>

The quasi-meteoric rise of the program in the early 1960s is evidenced by the succession of impressive figures that speak for themselves: 8,775 responses and 5,642 requests in 1959, 17,077 responses and 15,590 requests in 1960, 29,218 responses and 17,948 requests in 1961, and 20,974 responses in the first half of 1962. Minden called the 11,137 requests received during the same period a “mixed blessing”.

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<sup>6</sup> Foreign Service Dispatches No. 427, No. 592, and No. 229 by Ted M. Tanen, American Legation, Budapest to the State Department, Washington D.C., dated February 5, 1960, April 27, 1960, and November 8, 1960. National Archives, College Park, MD. Indirect requests came earlier from Hungarian poets and authors for books by modern American writers, and the Legation requested over 20 book titles for distribution with the help of the British Legation Information Service, apparently without any knowledge of the IAC/FEC/PSPD book project.

<sup>7</sup> FEC Highlights Items, December 7, 1962. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 1738.

Because his budget could take care of only 100,000 books a year, he was forced to cut down on scheduled titles to take care of the requests. Six years after its launching, the mailing project was providing practically all the intellectuals in Hungary and Poland, as well as important sections of the reading public in the other target countries, with the latest relevant books published in the Free World. From July 1956 through July 1962, the number of readers increased from 22,000 odd names gathered from telephone directories and newspapers to roughly 100,000 intellectuals, newspapermen, artists, and even government and party officials. During the same six years, the original modest number of 20 American, Canadian, and West European publishers and libraries which agreed to act as intermediaries in sending books selected by Minden and his staff had grown to over 500 publishers (including some Polish and Hungarian exile publishers), libraries, organizations, and universities. These “sponsors” mailed roughly 100,000 books a year in their own names, and the acknowledgements from grateful recipients were flowing in at a rate of over 3,000 a month. Books sent to Hungary often brought more than one reaction because they were circulated among friends. Mailings to Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia were limited mainly to exchanges with institutions, which insisted on sending their publications for the books they received. The small number of requests from Bulgaria all came from individuals who learned of the book mailings from others who had received books, indicating that the books that passed the censors were circulating. In Romania and the Baltic countries, where censorship was most severe, the choice of material and targets was more limited. In all countries, however, “The books that are stopped by the censors are channeled into a black market which takes care of their distribution.”<sup>8</sup>

The book mailing program continued to snowball, with 40,063 responses and 20,649 requests in 1962, 64,301 responses (30,227 from Poland and 26,877 from Hungary) and 41,237 requests (18,668 from Hungary and 17,841 from Poland) in 1963, 42,830 requests in 1965, 52,962 in 1966, and 60,102 in 1967. The total number of copies mailed to all countries decreased from 74,861 in 1960 to 70,313

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<sup>8</sup> Mailing Project Report from FEC President to The Executive Committee, July 26, 1962, 1–3. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 1738.



in 1961, then jumped to 85,674 in 1962 and 108,711 in 1963 (with roughly 51,000 to Poland and 30,000 to Hungary). In November 1963, the cumulative total of copies mailed and distributed since July 1956 reached the one million mark with 1,000,813, and rose to 1,010,532 by the end of 1963, representing 14,643 titles sent. 87,125 copies were sent in 1964, 96,412 in 1965, 96,605 in 1966 (with 60% to Poland), and 132,315 in 1967.<sup>9</sup>

Part of the rapid increase in the number of responses and requests was due to the offers made with the initial mailing, when a second or sometimes third free title was offered. Later on, lists of several titles were mailed from which the recipients could select the title(s) of their choice. At the bottom of the list, the recipient could enter the names and addresses of two other interested persons to whom books would also be mailed. Thanks to this method, it became possible to gain an increasingly large number of names and addresses. As a result, the number of customers continued to grow to the point where, mainly for budgetary reasons, it became impossible to satisfy all requests, whether self-induced or spontaneous.

Following a very successful Polish person-to-person program initiated under Sam Walter, Jr. in 1958, which distributed books and periodicals directly to Polish visitors to West Europe, Minden set up his own direct distribution network and expanded it during the 1960s to visitors from all East European countries. In this manner, it was possible to know with certainty that the book offered had actually been taken by the visitors who came to the various distribution points. After 1963, monthly and annual statistics listed separate figures for the mailing and the person-to-person programs, with the latter's monthly totals added to the monthly and annual totals received as a result of the mailings. Thus the term "book distributed" now covered both books mailed and books given directly to visitors from Eastern Europe. The person-to-person program proved to be extremely successful, with roughly 23,400 copies given out in 1963, 44,000 in 1964, 62,300 in 1965, 62,000 in 1967, and 87,500 in 1968. The combined totals of books distributed, consisting of

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<sup>9</sup> The annual figures are derived from the detailed monthly and annual statistics for the years 1963 through 1968, prepared for the FEC President by Minden and his staff. HIA, Minden Papers, Box 3, and monthly reports on microfiche, Provisional Box 3.

the books sent by scheduled direct mailing, mailed upon request, and distributed person-to-person, reached the impressive total of roughly 167,500 in 1964. In 1965, 188,000 books and periodicals were distributed to some 50,000 to 70,000 individuals and institutions. It was estimated that at least two-thirds of these books, or roughly 120,000, had been received, 58,000 mailed and acknowledged, and 62,000 directly handed out to approximately 30,000 Polish, 26,000 Hungarian, and 6,500 Czechoslovak visitors.<sup>10</sup>

Very little is known about a pilot project to China, suggested in 1961 by the CIA, to mail books to 96 academicians, most of them in Peking (Beijing), except that it was started but probably cancelled in the same year.<sup>11</sup> In late 1962, the CIA came up with the idea of extending the book mailing project to East Germany as a pilot operation, and contributed \$1,000 in addition to the regular FEC budget. It sent the FEC a selected list of 100 names from East German telephone books, largely described as members of the technical intelligentsia, and asked FEC's representative in Stockholm to initiate the project. FEC agreed to carry out the mailings, and in April 1963, three titles, including Djilas' *Conversations with Stalin*, in 130 copies, were sent to East Germany by Reklamservice, a Stockholm sponsor, and another title, *Information Please Almanac*, in 50 copies from New York. By August, the remaining four of the original eight scheduled mailings had been completed, with all German titles sent from Stockholm, giving a grand total of 223 copies. The Swedish sponsor received a total of 33 responses, a number of books were confiscated in Jena and Dresden, and one book was returned with the notice that under an August 4, 1954 ordinance concerning gifts, it would not be delivered.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> G. Minden, Undated Annual Report for 1965 on PSPD Book Distribution Program, 1–11. HIA, Minden Collection, Box 1.

<sup>11</sup> Letters from the Executive Committee to the [FEC] President, April 26, 1961, and June 22, 1961. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 31.

<sup>12</sup> Letters from the Executive Committee to The President [FEC] dated December 18, 1962, and February 25, 1963, and from the President [FEC] to the Executive Committee, January 23, 1963, 1–2, *ibid.* See also Memoranda from Minden to the [FEC] President, April [1963] Highlights, dated May 6, 1963, 4–5, and August [1963] Highlights, dated September 6, 1963, 3. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Microfiche Provisional Box 3. A gratified CIA offered to make \$2,000 available for the next fiscal year.

While responses rose to 38 for 223 books mailed and 27 more titles were being scheduled, more books were returned by the East German postal authorities, with the enclosed statement that “Papers and periodicals cannot be imported unless they are openly advertised for sale through the mails and are on a prepared list of accepted titles.” Six more titles, all in German, totaling 95 copies, were mailed in February 1964, and 11 titles, two of them in English, in April 1964. Due to censorship, only 26 confirmations of receipt arrived and 24 books were returned, with some titles admitted in one town and refused in another. None of the addressees wrote letters, but a pastor from Leipzig wrote a thank-you note and enclosed the postal form that showed that the book had been confiscated. Even if the rate of responses remained about one for every 10 copies sent, another effort was made in April 1964 by sending another 11 titles in 190 copies, all to selected individuals in East Germany.<sup>13</sup> Because of the meager results and the very severe censorship, the CIA decided to cancel the East German pilot mailing project.<sup>14</sup>

1965 was also marked by the initiation of yet another method of book distribution, namely “personalized” delivery and “personalized” mailing, a method already advocated in the late 1950s by U.S. government agencies that felt that American scholars would have a greater intellectual impact on intellectual circles in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe than U.S. officials. Through the cover of the International Advisory Council in New York, Minden began to provide books and periodicals to American professors, students, and journalists who were visiting or studying in Eastern Europe for distribution to East Europeans there. After their return to the U.S., the

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<sup>13</sup> Minden to the [FEC] President, April [1964] Highlights, dated May 5, 1964, 3, and PSPD Book Center, Monthly Report No. 93, April 1964, 1, Ibid. A single thank-you letter from the East German State Library in East Berlin was received in April 1965 for the *Memoirs* of Polish politician Wincenty Witos, a book not sent in the framework of the pilot project.

<sup>14</sup> The Executive Committee to the [FEC] President, November 2, 1964. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 31. An inquiry by this author in 2010 with the Office for the Records of the State Security Services (Stasi) of the former German Democratic Republic failed to turn up any document pertaining to this 1963–1964 trial mailing project. Helmut Stumpf to the author, September 9, 2011.

Americans, as the ostensible donors, would mail more books to their East European personal contacts.

The annual report from 1966 lists a total of 195,703 books distributed. The number of requested books rose to 62,962, from 42,530 in 1965, and requested books mailed numbered 35,288 as compared to 28,554 in 1965. These books went to some 50,000 to 70,000 selected individuals and organizations, and there was evidence that 60% of the books distributed were received. With written acknowledgements for 57,119 of the books mailed and 61,911 books distributed person-to-person, this gave a total of 119,030 books known to have reached targets.<sup>15</sup> In 1967, PSPD distributed a total of 273,113 books, a 4% increase over 1966, given to roughly 60,000 individuals and institutions. Poland received 87,890 books or 32% of the total, followed by Hungary with 73,412 books (27%), Czechoslovakia with 50,532 (18.5%), Romania with 38,780 (14%), and Bulgaria with 18,823 (7%). An estimated 85% of the roughly 60,000 requested books were mailed. This big increase was partly due to book donations from the USIA. 87,568 books and periodicals were given directly through the book distribution program, giving a total of 158,237 copies. The report listed 14,500 addresses for Poland (12,760 individuals and 1,800 institutions), 20,500 addresses for Czechoslovakia (19,000 and 1,500), 7,600 for Hungary (6,000 and 1,600), 9,500 for Romania, and 3,750 for Bulgaria.<sup>16</sup>

Minden called 1968 “the best year,” with a total of 327,628 books and periodicals distributed to over 70,000 individuals and institutions, a 20% increase over 1967. The ending of censorship in Czechoslovakia during the Prague Spring (it was reinstated at the end of 1969) played a major role in this increase. By then, PSPD had a total of over 100,000 addresses in Eastern Europe, some 74,000 of which were considered active. The Polish list counted 11,860 individuals and 1,400 institutions, followed by Czechoslovakia with 22,700 individuals, and Hungary with 9,000 individuals and 715 institutions. Romanian addresses numbered 11,860 individuals and 490 institutions, and

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<sup>15</sup> G. Minden, Undated PSPD Annual report for 1966 on the Book Distribution Program, 1–9, *ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> G. Minden, Undated PSPD Annual Report for 1967 on the Book Distribution Program, 1–33, *ibid.*

Bulgaria's list counted 4,900 names and addresses. This record in 1968 was due to an unprecedented number of written requests for books, above all from Czechoslovakia, as well as from Romania, where censorship had also almost completely disappeared, and the large increase of visitors to the West. Since books sent to libraries, universities, and schools were accessible to many readers, Minden estimated that in the course of a year, these books probably reached half a million persons. In 1968, the receipt of 83,223 books or 38.9% of the books mailed was acknowledged, and 109,049 books were distributed directly person-to-person, giving an impressive grand total of 192,272 of books or 59% of all books distributed.<sup>17</sup>

Minden's book program contracted in 1969, but the number of books distributed remained high thanks to gift books by the USIA. Acknowledgements of receipt were received for 91,834 books or 55% of those mailed. With an additional 104,630 books and periodicals distributed to East European visitors to the West, Minden had direct evidence that of the total of 274,009 books distributed in 1969, 200,463 were received. That year, 82,013 books (30.3%) went to Poland, 64,559 (23.5%) to Czechoslovakia, 56,405 (20.6%) to Hungary, 21,346 to Romania (7.8%), and 21,346 to Bulgaria (7.8%).<sup>18</sup>

Throughout the 1960s, Minden enjoyed the confidence and full support of FEC President John Richardson, Jr., whom he briefed regularly every Tuesday morning. In his praise for PSPD's annual report for 1967, the latter wrote: "The Book center once again has performed an enormous service to the peoples of East Central Europe and the cause of freedom. I am very proud to be associated with an activity which continues to be operated with such outstanding efficiency,

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<sup>17</sup> Undated PSPD Report for 1968 on the Book Distribution Program, 1–21, and PSPD Book Distribution Monthly Report No. 138, January 1968, through Report No. 19, December 1968. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Microfiche Provisional Box 3.

<sup>18</sup> George C. Minden, Free Europe, Inc. PSPD, Office of the Director, Annual Report Calendar Year 1969 on the Book Distribution Program, 1–35. HIA, George Minden Collection, Box 1; PSPD Book Center Monthly Report No. 150, January 1969, through Report No. 161, December 1969; and HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Microfiche Provisional Box 3.

skill, and discretion.”<sup>19</sup> One year before leaving FEC, Richardson sent Minden a personal letter full of praise for his accomplishments. “[...] the programs you have developed reflect brilliance in conception and efficiency in execution of an extraordinarily high order, unique in my own experience. Your high standards for your own performance in all aspects of your job are an inspiration to your colleagues, in fact to all of us who know and admire you.”<sup>20</sup> Minden gave regular presentations before the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of FEC, which also praised his abilities and concluded that the operations of his Division “continued to be successful”.<sup>21</sup>

In his interview for the Library of Congress, Richardson mentioned the covert book project and called Minden “a wonderful man, Romanian refugee, very bright. [...] He set up this whole mechanism himself. He was a genius at it and he was very, very careful about security. Very careful about what, who, where—anything compromising. He set up an elaborate network of bookstores and supply of books that never got found out. Nobody ever penetrated it. It was a remarkable achievement. [...] Since this was all secret, there was no public pressure on it. By far the most secret thing I was involved in. [...] Four or five people worked under him, one for each country [...] people he [Minden] picked and that I knew and that were very responsible, very bright, very capable people who picked these books.” As for the covert side of the operation, the CIA was very interested in the program, and all of Minden’s reports and lists were routinely forwarded for review and occasional comments to the “Executive Committee,” where Richardson was dealing with Cord Meyer. According to Richardson, “That was just a normal level of bureaucratic review [...] which wasn’t a serious impediment. We had pretty

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<sup>19</sup> Memorandum from John Richardson to George Minden dated February 5, 1968. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 260.

<sup>20</sup> John Richardson to George Minden, February 19, 1968, *ibid.* The main link between Richardson and Minden was John Dunning, Jr. (1913–1996), a Princeton graduate and former U.S. Department of State and USIA employee who joined FEC in 1950 and served until 1975 in the key post of Director of Operations Planning and Executive Assistant to the President.

<sup>21</sup> Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the Free Europe Committee, Inc., October 5, 1961, 3, and February 7, 1973, 6. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 2322.

much of a free hand. [...] I don't have any doubt that the CIA used it for intelligence—of course they would have. [...] It was an important source of information.”<sup>22</sup>

What was a “normal level of bureaucratic review”? Besides paying for the bills, the CIA also wanted to know how the money was spent, and carefully read and evaluated the operations of the book project. At times, it even expressed its appreciation “to Mr. Minden and through him to his staff” for their efforts.<sup>23</sup> It also occasionally made queries and sent “suggestions” to the FEC president in matters pertaining to the book project. According to a document from 1965, one of its major concerns was to determine how adequately materials that had political significance were distributed to important persons in the target countries, also because “in terms of quantities and costs, the PSPD program was the Executive Committee’s largest effort.” Distribution of political books through the person-to-person program was judged outstanding and worthy of further development, especially for Czechoslovakia. The EC felt too much was spent on Poland and not enough on Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Bulgaria, and suggested sending fewer materials to Polish institutions and more to important individuals, as well as to exercise more control over the mailing of scientific and technical works. If no control was possible, the financial support for that particular distribution should be discontinued. In the case of Romania and Bulgaria, institutions received the bulk of items sent, and the person-to-person programs for these two countries could be further developed, including books in Russian for individual Bulgarians. The capabilities for the personalized mailing program to all target countries could also be enhanced. The EC further suggested that PSPD should expand its reporting on distribution and include, in

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<sup>22</sup> John Richardson, Jr., interview dated February 9, 1999, The Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, Library of Congress, American Memory Home, 23–5. Richardson brought in as his Executive Vice President the very able John Page, a Bell System Vice President in Seattle, who “did all the work [...] it saved my bacon.” Also the interview with Richardson by this author on March 26, 2008, during which he reiterated his admiration for Minden and for the book project he managed.

<sup>23</sup> Letter from The Executive Committee to the President [FEC], November 27, 1964. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 2322.



addition to the number of titles mailed, the number of copies mailed from Europe and the U.S.<sup>24</sup>

In his response, Richardson (or rather Minden) wrote that the personalized sending of books could not be enlarged “because of the relatively small number of people who are prepared to get involved in this type of operation”—in other words, an admission that not every American professor or student was willing to compromise themselves by smuggling controversial books across the Iron Curtain. The fact that the Polish program was larger than that of the other target countries was justified by Poland’s much larger population, and by the much stricter censorship in Bulgaria and the Baltic countries. PSPD disagreed and called “restrictive” the suggested distribution to important target personalities when the size of the “intelligently curious thinking elite” was between 40,000 and 70,000 people. Books mailed to Polish institutions were mostly of a political character, while such books would be stopped by the censors if sent to individuals. Thus, a reduction of distribution to Polish libraries was “not advisable” because, contrary to what the EC wrote, these institutions did not have “relatively easy access to western publications.” Finally, PSPD reported that it had already started to build up a person-to-person distribution network for Romania and Bulgaria.<sup>25</sup>

On the positive side, from 1956 onwards the EC made available valuable telephone directories, especially hard to get in the case of the capital cities of Romania and Bulgaria, and other regions. Thus, Romanian and Bulgarian phone books remained the most requested ones throughout the 1960s. But Polish, Czech, Slovak, and Hungarian city and provincial telephone directories were also in great

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<sup>24</sup> Letter from The Executive Committee to the President [FEC], December 13, 1965, 1–4, *ibid.* There were also occasional inquiries about book publishing activities or the domestic reaction to émigré publications. All the direct correspondence between Minden and The Executive Committee after the book project was separated from FEC in 1970 remains unavailable.

<sup>25</sup> Letter from The President [FEC] to the Executive Committee, December 27, 1965, 1–10, and two enclosures, *ibid.* The lengthy and detailed reply, most probably prepared by Minden for Richardson, shows that the former was prepared to hold his ground when he felt that not all of the EC’s “suggestions” were suitable for the book project.



demand, including those for Warsaw, Poznań, Łódź, Lublin, Gdańsk, Katowice, Opole, Szczecin, Wrocław, and other cities in Poland, Prague, Bratislava, and Košice in Czechoslovakia, and even Tallinn in Estonia. These directories, absolutely essential for the mailing project, were needed to replace older ones. They were requested by the FEC President and the EC, which did its best to deliver the requested phone books, probably obtained through diplomatic channels. The EC also sent lists of Bulgarian, Czechoslovak, Hungarian, Polish, Romanian, and Soviet diplomats and other officials stationed abroad, annual directories of East European officials in each target country, directories of East European academies of sciences and institutes, faculty members of universities and schools of higher educations, lists of physicians, etc. In one instance, it forwarded a 684-page list of addresses of individuals and institutions in Budapest and the provinces for the Hungarian mailing project, and apologized for the appearance of some of the sheets, because “We felt we should delete the somewhat stringent and anti-Communist remarks of the compilers for this exercise.”<sup>26</sup> In this manner, Minden’s national editors were able to further enlarge and update their growing number of mailing addresses in all target countries.

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<sup>26</sup> The Executive Committee to the President [FEC], April 27, 1962, *ibid.* The RFE/RL Corporate Records hold at least letters 30 letters from the EC to the FEC president or vice versa sending or requesting telephone directories. FEC returned the favor by sending to the EC communist party and government line-ups prepared by its national research sections.

## CHAPTER 6

# Western and Émigré Periodicals and Books Published with Covert Support

Since 1957, FEC regularly sent the Polish émigré periodical *Kultura* and the Czechoslovak émigré magazine *Svědectví* to Poland and Czechoslovakia, respectively. Throughout the 1960s, Free Europe's West European Operations Division (WEOD), later renamed Press and Special Projects Division (PSPD), financially supported a large number of East European émigré political and literary journals and magazines, whose very existence often depended on this kind of support. This was done through the purchase of a large quantity of copies for mailing to Eastern Europe or direct distribution to East European visitors to the West. In 1966, Free Europe supported, in whole or in part, 23 publications at a total cost of \$338,000 annually. In addition to a number of publications for Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, and the Baltic countries not managed by Minden's PSDP, the list included FE's own monthly magazine, *East Europe*, launched in the mid-1950s (with a circulation of 8,500 copies), its German and French editions *Osteuropäische Rundschau* and *Témoignages* (11,500 and 7,500 copies, respectively), and the bi-weeklies *News from Czechoslovakia*, *News from Hungary*, and *News from Poland*. The list also included two Polish and four Hungarian émigré periodicals.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Publications Supported by Free Europe, Inc., July 12, 1966, 1–2, with Memo from Free Europe President to The Executive Committee dated July 13, 1966, 1–2. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 32. Issues of some émigré periodicals were forwarded upon request to the Executive Committee by the FEC President.

The anti-communist monthly *Kultura* (Culture), published by Jerzy Giedroyc in Paris, had since the late-1950s been distributed by both Walker and Minden, and many channels were used to get it past the censors into Poland. PSPD received many concrete indications that *Kultura* was widely read and disseminated inside Poland. Copies were mailed to Poles in Havana and given to Polish sailors passing through Antwerp, Amsterdam, and Leghorn, Italy, to read during their long days at sea. Two Polish travel agencies in London also gave it to passengers going to Poland. RUCH, the major Polish distribution agency for foreign publications, requested 18 subscriptions. A Polish bookstore owner in London began mailing *Kultura* to 24 customers by inserting it into parcels with their regular orders.<sup>2</sup> A recent Polish emigrant to the U.S. wrote that he had succeeded in getting the magazine in Poland and wished to subscribe to it. The Polish government was also interested in it, as shown by a letter from the Polish Embassy in Denmark answering a request for a subscription payment. They sent the money and asked for back issues. A year later, the Polish Consulate in Paris also ordered a subscription. The University Library of Warsaw wrote that it had received three issues of *Kultura* from the National Library, an indication that the main Polish libraries cooperated with each other in distributing dangerous political literature.<sup>3</sup> Over the years, *Kultura* continued to be in great demand, and its impact in Poland remained considerable. It was circulated among groups and considered the best periodical in the Polish language. It was possible to read its current and back issues after getting the necessary permission for access to the so-called restricted material in university libraries. A Polish visitor to Vienna reported that many readers in Poland were allowed to borrow *Kultura* from scientific libraries, but could take copies only for one night and had to return them by the

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<sup>2</sup> George Minden, April [1963] Highlights, dated May 6, 1963, 2; November [1963] Highlights, dated December 6, 1963, 2; and March [1964] Highlights, dated April 8, 1964, 2. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Microfiche Provisional Box 3.

<sup>3</sup> Minden, April [1966] Highlights, dated May 4, 1965, 3; March [1966] Highlights, dated April 11, 1966, 1; and June [1966] Highlights, dated July 19, 1966, 2, *ibid.*

time the library reopened the next day. By the end of 1968, however, the monthly became increasingly difficult to get.<sup>4</sup>

The American Polish-language quarterly *Tematy*, the high level cultural quarterly of Perspectives in Culture, Inc. in New York, was edited by Paul Mayewski, who was able to visit Poland in 1965. It was entirely subsidized by PSPD and published in London without any attribution to Free Europe, Inc. All material was reprinted from American and English literary and cultural publications, including many university publications. The majority of its 2,000 copies, 300 of them purchased and mailed by PSPD, were distributed in Poland, with one hundred copies distributed by RUCH, the official Polish distributing agency, and one hundred by the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw. The quarterly was well known among Polish intellectuals, who had a high regard for it, and many of the translations were done in Poland. Direct confirmations or requests by mail were rarely received, but in 1964 the Library of the University of Poznań confirmed for the first time the receipt of *Tematy* and asked for back issues which had been mailed but had not arrived. The University Library of Warsaw asked for nine back issues "to fill the gaps in the sets of this paper," and the National Library in Warsaw, after receiving *Tematy*, wrote that it was eager to have the journal in its collection of publications that were not allowed to be sold or circulated. Polish visitors in Paris reported that the review could occasionally be bought at a kiosk in Warsaw.<sup>5</sup>

Another Polish-language, anti-communist weekly published in London, with a circulation of 3,300 copies, was *Wiadomości*. Edited by Mieczysław Grydzewski (1894–1970), it continued the tradition of the prewar Polish journal. Though primarily literary, it also discussed political topics. Many of its contributors were Polish-American professors and Polish writers who had escaped to the West. To get past the censors, 100 copies of each issue were sent by first class mail in the form of clippings to some 500 individuals in Poland together with its

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<sup>4</sup> Minden, December [1964] Highlights, dated January 5, 1965, 1; and March–April [1969] Highlights Report, dated May 12, 1969, 3 and 5, *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Minden, April [1966] Highlights, dated May 11, 1966, 3–4; and May [1966] Highlights, dated June 13, 1966, 3, *Ibid.* The January 27, 1968 issue of the weekly *Kronika*, a Polish regime magazine published in Warsaw, wrote favorably about the contents of *Tematy*.

monthly supplement *Na Antenie* (3,800 copies), which contained the texts of selected RFE broadcasts. Furthermore, 100 to 150 copies of the weekly were distributed each month to Poles visiting the West. The clippings reached Poland in quantity, as confirmed by the visiting literary critic Artur Sandauer, a number of writers, and staff members of the National Library in Warsaw. The Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences thanked the weekly and included a list of issues, some going back several years, which were not in the library's possession. A number of biographies published in Poland also cited *Wiadomości*. In addition, PSPD mailed the journal *Zeszyty Historyczne* (Historical notes), published by the Institute Literacki, to Poland and Lithuania. Another Polish literary magazine published in London, *Oficyna Poetów* (Poets' workshop), was also well received and praised in Poland.<sup>6</sup>

Hungarian publications included *Új Látóhatár* (New horizon), a political and cultural bi-monthly launched in Munich after the 1956 Revolution. It was published in 1,800 copies by József Molnár and edited by Gyula Borbándi. PSPD bought 500 copies of each issue, 200 for direct mailing to Hungary and 300 for its person-to-person program, while Molnár mailed 700 copies to Hungary at his own expense. The Hungarian government also ordered 18 copies of each issue and the magazine was sold in Novi Sad and Subotica through Molnár's connections with the Yugoslav publishing house Forum. Between July 1, 1968 and June 30, 1969, a total of 220 books and 400 magazines were sent to Yugoslavia for distribution. Molnár also had a Hungarian distributor in Bern, Péter Gosztönyi, head of the Hungarian Library, and one in Stockholm in the person of Géza Thinsz. His Munich editorial office also served as a book distribution center, where Hungarian visitors from Hungary, Slovakia, and Transylvania were given free books and periodicals, many of them in

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<sup>6</sup> Minden, December [1964] Highlights, dated January 11, 1965, 2; and May [1966] Highlights, dated June 19, 1966, 4, Ibid. More information and data on both Polish and Hungarian publications supported by PSPD are contained in each semi-annual report on the East-West Contacts Program. George Minden, Director PSPD Division, Semi-Annual Reports for July–December 1965, 22–4; January 1–30 June, 1966, 24–7; July 1–December 31, 1967, 22–31; January 1–June 30, 1968, 20–6; July 1–December 31, 1968, 23–8; January 1–June 30, 1969, 22–31.

the Hungarian language. Visiting writers suggested that the magazine should devote more attention to the problems of ethnic Hungarians in Romania and Czechoslovakia. The magazine was well known and highly praised in Hungary, and had many contacts with Hungarians. It received a great deal of mail and was occasionally mentioned in the domestic press and radio. It was also cited in various books and literary publications in Hungary, in Slovakia by the periodical *Új Szó* published in Bratislava, and in Yugoslavia. In the first half of 1968, *Irodalmi Szemle*, a Hungarian literary magazine published in Bratislava, proposed a collaboration with *Új Látóhatár* by publishing the works of Hungarian émigré writers and Hungarian writers in Slovakia in their respective magazines.<sup>7</sup>

*Mérleg* (Balance), a Hungarian intellectual quarterly published in 4,400 copies in Vienna by the Hungarian Pax Romana in Munich and edited by János Boór, contained both original material and material taken from Roman Catholic periodicals published in Western Europe and the United States. PSPD bought 750 copies of each issue—500 for direct mailing to Hungary and 250 for person-to-person distribution. In addition, *Mérleg* itself also mailed copies to the ethnic Hungarian population in Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia. It was often mentioned and quoted in the Hungarian Catholic press, with excerpts reprinted in Catholic periodicals (*Új Ember*, *Teológia*), and received close to 500 letters during the first half of 1969 alone. In June 1969, the authorities authorized the sale of the quarterly in Hungary but at a very high subscription rate.<sup>8</sup>

PSPD also supported *Magyar Híradó* (Hungarian messenger), a monthly newspaper edited by Gyula Klamár with a highly political emphasis and an outspokenly pro-American line. It was launched as an information bulletin in Vienna with Austrian support by Hungarian

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<sup>7</sup> Originally a bi-monthly supported by WEOD, *Új Látóhatár* came close to termination, but then gained a second lease on life in 1959–1960 as a quarterly. Memos from the Executive Committee to the FEC President, June 19, 1959, and October 22, 1959. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Microfilm Reels 10–15.

<sup>8</sup> *Mérleg* received many responses full of praise from Hungary. FEC Highlight Item, dated September 2, 1965, 1–2. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Microfiche Provisional Box 3.

exiles after the Revolution of October 1956. When that support ended in 1961, the paper was rescued first by FEC's WEOD, then taken over by PSPD. By 1965, it had a run of 7,000 copies. PSPD bought 700 copies of each issue (300 for mailing and 400 for person-to-person distribution). The newspaper itself mailed 300 more copies a month to libraries and official organizations in Hungary, and 150 to Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. It was given away to Hungarian travelers on trains and train stations, buses, Danube steamers and Vienna hotels, and over 1,000 copies a month were distributed by Austrian tourists going to Hungary. The newspaper received hundreds of commendatory letters and a great many Hungarian visitors to Vienna, including prominent writers, scholars, and artists, came in person to its editorial office to receive free of charge publications supplied through the person-to-person program (1,248 visitors and 1,900 books during the second half of 1967 alone).<sup>9</sup>

The literary quarterly *Magyar Műhely* (Hungarian workshop), launched in 1962 in Paris by a group of young Hungarian exile writers and edited by Pál Nagy, was partially supported by FEC's WEOP through its Paris office and by Minden's PSPD after 1966. The magazine sought to be a bridge between the West and Hungary, and, besides the works of Hungarian exiles also published those of poets and writers in Hungary, such as Sándor Weöres, who found it hard to have their works published there. The publication of Weöres's anthology in the West caused considerable embarrassment to the regime. The magazine was closely scrutinized in Hungary and mentioned from time to time in Hungarian literary periodicals, usually in appreciative terms. It aroused lively debates among Hungarian writers, some of whom wished to see it circulate in Hungary and be available on the newsstands there. 60% of the 1,200 copies printed in 1965 were mailed to Hungary and Yugoslavia free of charge, and the number of copies was increased to

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<sup>9</sup> The voluminous correspondence about the vicissitudes and rescue of *Magyar Híradó* in 1961–1962 can be found in HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 234, Folder 20. During a 1971 meeting in Vienna, Klamár told this author that when copies of the fresh issue of *Magyar Híradó* were given to the newspaper kiosk at Vienna's main railroad station for free distribution to tourists from Hungary, a staff member of the Hungarian Embassy would show up and try to buy all copies.

1,500 by 1968. Of those, PSPD bought 250 for person-to-person distribution and 250 more for mailing to Hungary.

Through one of its Paris editors, *Magyar Műhely* received many letters from Hungary and occasionally from Slovakia and Transylvania. The editors were also active in East-West contacts, receiving and sometimes hosting and assisting Hungarians travelling to the West (roughly 200 persons a year), among them many prominent writers and intellectuals coming to Paris. They held monthly meetings attended by Hungarian writers from Hungary and living abroad. In 1967, they organized an East-West meeting of young writers named "Atelier I," and another, "Atelier II," planned for 1968 did not materialize. The lectures given there were published in book form, and PSPD bought 280 copies for mailing and person-to-person distribution. In 1963, the magazine was visited by a member of the Hungarian Government's Institute for Cultural Relations with the West, who proposed an exchange of manuscripts, and by József Darvas, Chairman of the Hungarian Writers' Union and former Minister of Culture. Darvas said he would propose the approval of the exchange and the freedom of circulation of *Magyar Műhely* in Hungary. A year later, one of the magazine's editors returned to Hungary, and in 1968 two editors of the quarterly attended a conference of translators of Hungarian in Budapest. By mid-1969, Minden noted in his report that in its search for a dialogue, the magazine "scrupulously avoids political commentary and criticism of the present Hungarian regime." In May 1969, *Magyar Műhely* was officially authorized to receive subscriptions from Hungary through the government agency Kultúra, which led Minden to cut by half his per copy subsidy price. His last purchase of 250 copies was in April 1969.<sup>10</sup>

Another Hungarian émigré periodical that deserves a mention is the bi-monthly *Irodalmi Újság* (Literary journal), launched in 1950 as a literary weekly of the Hungarian Writers' Union. It was the main organ of the so-called "writers' revolt" between 1953 and 1956, and its only issue published during the Hungarian Revolution on November 2, 1956, was translated into more than 20 languages. After the crushing

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<sup>10</sup> Correspondence between FEC and *Magyar Műhely* from 1958 to 1966, the magazine's reports of activities, and details about the publication of Weöres' anthology. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 234, Folder 21.



of the revolution, a score of writers founded the Hungarian Writers' Federation in Exile (HWFE) and re-launched the periodical in London with the support of the Congress for Cultural Freedom. The sharply anti-communist bi-weekly was very popular among Hungarian refugees to the West but ran into internal dissension. With the defection of two of its members to Hungary, the HWFE fell apart and ceased to exist, but the paper was saved by FEC's WEOD. At the end of 1961, the periodical moved to Paris, with the writer and journalist Endre Enczi (1902–1974) as editor-in-chief, helped by Tibor Méray (1924–), a former communist writer and journalist, who became editor-in-chief from 1971 to 1989. Another contributor was the prominent writer and historian Ferenc (François) Fejtő (1909–2008), who had lived in France for 25 years. In line with the relative "liberalization" of the Kádár regime in Hungary, the paper eased its tone and sought contacts with Hungarian writers travelling abroad. In September 1965, while on an official visit to Paris, a member of the HSWP's Politburo, Zoltán Komócsin, encouraged Enczi to return to Hungary, but was met with a categorical refusal. The same month, Minden reported that PSPD was buying 170 subscriptions of the magazine, increased in 1968 to 200 (60 for mailing and 140 for person-to-person distribution).<sup>11</sup>

Non-subsidized Hungarian periodicals, purchased on an issue-to-issue basis by PSPD after 1964 for mailing and person-to-person distribution, included the monthly *Új Európa* (New Europe), published in Munich and edited by Emil Csonka (80 to 100 copies), the Catholic magazine *Katolikus Szemle* (Catholic review), published in Rome since 1968 by Gellért Békés (25 to 30 copies), and *Magyar Történelmi Szemle* (Hungarian historical review), with no figures available. FEC support for the émigré periodical *Nemzetőr* (Guardian), published in Munich and edited by Tibor Tollas, was discontinued in 1963.

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<sup>11</sup> On the travails of *Irodalmi Újság*, see L. Delgado's memos to B. Yarrow, October 17, 1958, to J. Richardson and to R. W. Minton, February 4, 1960, to John Hunt, August 30, 1961, and October 2, 1961, and G. Minden's memo to A. Hovey, July 10, 1968. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Central Files. To be sure, Minden asked the writer Imre Kovács, as well as Sándor Kiss, the Hungarian national editor of Free Europe's *East Europe* magazine, for their written opinion of the periodical. Memo from Minden to Hovey, July 10, 1968. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 30.

Czechoslovak émigré periodicals mailed and distributed person-to-person included *Svědectví* (Testimony), published in Paris and edited by the writer and publisher Pavel Tigrid (1903–2003), which was widely read by Czechoslovak exiles and dissidents in Czechoslovakia. Other Czechoslovak émigré journals were *České slovo* (The Czech word), *Naše snahy* (Our efforts), a bi-monthly journal in Slovak published in Toronto of which PSPD bought 50 copies, *Proměny* (Changes), with 70 copies bought, *Zprávy SVU* (SVU News), a bulletin published in New York by the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Science in America (SVU), and the quarterly *Nový žurnal* (New review). In the second half of 1967 and first half of 1968, PSPD also purchased 800 copies of *Ființa Românească*, a cultural magazine published in Paris at irregular intervals by Romanian exiles who were in touch with the Carol I Foundation located in the French capital. From July 1, 1970 until June 30, 1973, IAC kept distributing the following East European émigré periodicals: *Kultura*, *Na Antenie* and *Wiadomości* (Polish), *Proměny*, *Svědectví* and *Česko slovo* (Czech), *Naše snahy* (Slovak), and *Irodalmi Újság*, *Új Látóhatár*, *Magyar Híradó*, and *Mérleg* (Hungarian). The list of American and West European periodicals had been cut back from 43 in the second half of 1970 (34 in English, six in French, and three in German), to a much more modest 17 (15 in English, two in French).

While still in existence, FEC's Exile Policy Division also supported in whole or in part the following publications: *Baltic Review* and its Spanish edition *Revista Baltica*, published by the Committee for a Free Lithuania, *Romania*, by the Rumanian National Committee, *Shqiptari i Lire*, by the Free Albania Committee, *Shejzat*, by an Albanian exile group in Rome, *Free and Independent Bulgaria*, by the Bulgarian National Committee, *Híradó* (New York), by the Association of Hungarian Students of North America, *Hungarian Quarterly*, edited by Imre Kovács, by the Hungarian National Committee, *Romania*, by the Rumanian National Committee, *Romanian Literary Review*, by the Carol I Foundation, *La Nation Roumaine*, by the French Rumanian National Committee, and *Jutro Polski*, by the Polish Peasant Party in London.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The President [FEC] to The Executive Committee, July 13, 1966. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 32.

*Books published and/or translated with PSPD support.* From the inception of the book program onwards, FEP undertook the translation and printing of various publications, starting in 1957 with Milovan Djilas' *The New Class*, printed in 11,000 copies in Munich in Bulgarian, Czech, Hungarian, Polish, and Romanian translation, followed in 1959 by Boris Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago*. In 1957 and 1958, FEP published several books dealing with the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, the role of the Hungarian Army during the revolution (in Hungarian), and a selection of Hungarian prose fiction written between 1954 and 1956. In the 1960s, when Minden headed the PSPD, it became common practice to assist with the publication and occasionally the translation of a specific book when it was believed there was a specific need for it. This assistance took the form of a guarantee to the publisher to buy a given number of copies of the book if they went ahead with its publication. In a few cases, PSPD helped to have a work translated or commissioned a book's publication and purchased the entire printing for both mailing and person-to-person distribution. Most of these books were translations or original writings in Polish and Hungarian, and occasionally in other East European languages. When a publication was very successful, reprints were ordered.

Because of the severe restrictions imposed on literary freedom and the shortage of all sorts of books in Poland, the importance of Polish exile literature increased in the late 1950s. The best Polish books were published in the West and not in Poland, and exile Polish publishing houses were encouraged to look for unpublished manuscripts in their possession, which they were unable to publish themselves for lack of funds. The publication of writings by Polish writers living in Poland was also considered. The earliest Polish books published in 1958 with the support of Sam Walker's East European Institute (EEI) were *Czas Niepokoju* (The time of anxiety), an anthology of contemporary British and American poetry edited by Pawel Mayewski, *Filozofia Amerykanska* (American philosophy) by J. Krzywicki, and a collection of economic studies edited by Adam Rudzki.<sup>13</sup> By 1960, the output of the émigré Polish publishers was impressive, and Polish literary

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<sup>13</sup> FEC and EEI were very well informed of the dire situation of Polish literature and writers and of the need to help Polish publishing houses and to publish special books of their own. Unsigned memo from Paris dated February 1959, 1–4. HIA, Sam Walker Collection, Box 4.

circles relied very much on the supply of this kind of literature, particularly the Polish edition of *Dr. Zhivago*. But according to one correspondent, readers in Poland did not always uncritically approve the choice of émigré books. Their best chance of success was either with publications opposed to the communist doctrine imposed on Poland, or with works that could not be published in Poland. The Polish people expected the émigrés to speak on their behalf and to publish good historical and literary works in order to “keep the nation within the framework of proper civilization.”<sup>14</sup> The main publishers of books in Polish were the Polish Writers Association, the Polish Cultural Foundation, the Polish School of Political and Social Sciences, and Gryf, all in London, and Kultura, Libella, and the Institut Littéraire in Paris. Hungarian books were published by Aurora Verlag, Heller and Molnár in Munich, and Occidental Press in Washington, D.C.

In 1960, in order to give a larger number of people a good background in contemporary Western thought, Minden started a series of publications in Polish and Hungarian, with a bibliography in Polish compiled by the Polish School of Political and Social Science in London. Polish translators living in Poland and France translated Gaëtan Picon’s *Panorama de idées contemporaines* (Panorama of contemporary thought) under the supervision of the Polish publishing house Libella in Paris. 1,000 copies of the first book and 1,300 of the second were mailed to Poland. Minden also initiated a Polish translation of a manual of twentieth-century literature by P. Castex and P. Surer to be printed by Libella, a French collection of economic articles to be translated by Librairie Polonaise in 1,000 copies each, a Hungarian translation in 1,000 copies to be printed by Occidental Press in Washington, D.C., and a book dealing with the latest writings of post-Keynesian British economists, also in 1,000 copies.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Unsigned Report No. 12, [1960], Polonia Book Fund, 1–6, *ibid.*, Box 2. Hundreds of book titles in Polish were handed out in 1958–1959 to Polish visitors to Western Europe through the efforts of Sam Walker and Andrzej Stypulkowski. The Polish edition and the French and English translations of *Dr. Zhivago* were in great demand, and the book was requested even by a leading member of the Sejm (the Polish parliament).

<sup>15</sup> G. Minden to R. W. Minton, October 27, 1960, 1–2, and The Director [FEP] to The Executive Committee, November 17, 1960. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 32.

During 1965, PSPD assisted in the publication of two Polish books, *Exile Literature*, Vol. 2, edited by Tymon Terlecki, and *From Sobieski to Kosciuszko* by M. Kukiel, as well as a French edition of *Anthology of Polish Poetry* edited by K.A. Jelinski. Also assisted were a Hungarian and Czech translation of *USA and its Economic Future*, by Arnold B. Barach (a Polish translation was published the following year), a Hungarian translation of *Le milieu divin* by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, a reprint of the Hungarian translation of Picon's *Panorama des idées contemporaines*, 1,000 copies of a translation of Mihajlo Mihajlov's *Moscow Summer, 1964* in Hungarian, Czech, Bulgarian, Polish, and Romanian, and *Icicle* by Abram Tertz in Czech.<sup>16</sup>

In 1966, 1967, and 1968, a large number of Polish books were published with PSPD assistance: *History of the Polish Socialist Party*, Vol. 1, by Adam and Lidia Ciołkosz, *Anthology of American and British Poetry* edited by Paul Mayewski (in Polish), *Memoirs* by Andrew Nagorski, *Selected Essays of Aldous Huxley*, translated by Ian Kempka, *History of the U.S.A.* by Pawel Zaremba (second revised edition), *Memoirs and Documents of the Polish Underground Army and Politicians and Soldiers* by Józef Garliński, *Wiedomości in Exile* edited by S. Kosowska, *Anthology on European Socialism* edited by A. Ciołkosz, *In Dmowski's School* by Tadeusz Bielecki, *Underground Army* by General Tadeusz Bor-Komorowski, *Hitler's Finest Ally and Fringe of Freedom* by Aleksander Bregman, *The Polish Participation in the Napoleonic Wars* by Marian Kujawski, *Democracy and Changing Social Ideals* edited by J. Ostaszewski, and reprints of *Little Known Poland* by George Flemming (in Polish) and of the Polish translation of Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago*. Hungarian books included *Essay on the Hungarian Revolution* and *Huns in the West* by László Cs. Szabó, *Diary 1945–1957* by Sándor Márai, *Le phénomène humain* by Teilhard de Chardin, *Hungarian Social Reader* edited by William Juhász, *Freedom under the Snow* edited by Tamás Aczél, *Workshop I* by the editors of *Magyar Műhely*, *Solar Eclipse* by

<sup>16</sup> Book Publishing Activities, Memorandum from George Minden to John Dunning, November 12, 1967, 1–6. The memo lists the publisher, language, number of copies, distribution, and cost of each book. In 1965, PSPD supported a total of 71 émigré and other organizations and publications in the West, ten of which were in Polish and seven in Hungarian. HIA, George Minden Collection, Box 1.

József Bakucz, and a Hungarian translation of *Twenty Letters to a Friend* by Svetlana Alliluyeva. PSPD helped publish in Czech 1,000 copies of an 80-page booklet entitled *In the Name of the Republic* on the rehabilitation of Rudolf Slanský, *Our Task, Direction and Goal* by Miroslav Tyrš, *Czechoslovak Summer 1967* by the editors of *Svědectví*, and a translation from Russian into Czech of *Great Elegy* by Josip Brodsky.<sup>17</sup>

In 1969, the last full year Minden's division was part of Free Europe, Inc., PSPD helped publish three books in Hungarian, *Hungarian Calvary*, *Hungarian Resurrection* by Oszkár Jászi, *Szabó Dezső* by Gyula Gombos, and *New Horizons* edited by György Gömöri, as well as an anthology of Hungarian poets living abroad since 1956, and one book in Polish, *The Brest-Litovsk Treaty with Poland* by Stefan Witold Wojstowski. The following books were in preparation: two Polish books, *History of the Polish Socialist Party, Vol. 2*, by Adam and Lidia Ciołkosz, and *The Polish Community in the British Isles, Vol. 2*, by Bohdan Jeżewski, *Contemporary Polish Muse* by György Gömöri in Hungarian and Polish, and one Hungarian book, *Around Ideologies*, edited by Tibor Hanák.<sup>18</sup>

One particular book deserves special mention, namely *Panorama des idées contemporaines* edited by Gaëtan Picon, with selections from well-known contemporary writers, philosophers, scientists, and political thinkers, and giving a broad view of Western thought. It was printed and reprinted several times in Polish and in Hungarian translation (the latter reached six editions) for both mailing and person-to-person distribution. Extremely popular and highly praised for its contents, it remained for 30 years one of the most sought-after books in Hungary, eliciting overwhelmingly positive, even enthusiastic responses and many eager spontaneous requests from recipients in both countries. Picon's second edition in 1963 resulted in a flood of requests from Hungary. In one instance, 44 Catholic seminarists asked the book to be sent to their private addresses. A Hungarian chemist

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<sup>17</sup> George C. Minden, Annual Report for 1966 on the Book Distribution Program, Free Europe, Inc. PSPD, Addendum #3; Annual Report for 1967 on the Book Distribution Program, Addendum #4; Annual Report for 1968 on the Book Distribution Program, Appendix 4, *ibid*.

<sup>18</sup> George C. Minden, Annual Report Calendar Year 1969 on the Book Distribution Program, Free Europe, Inc. Appendix 5, *ibid*.



wrote: "Picon's book is a marvelous work. Indeed, it has given me even a few almost sleepless nights, namely I could not put it down."<sup>19</sup> A Hungarian literary historian who received the 1963 edition as a young man recently recalled that Picon's book was like a "wonder, an opening and a ray of light" through the Iron Curtain. It started to circulate and was discussed for weeks in Budapest's Belvárosi Kávéház (Inner City Coffeehouse) and enriched such authors as Sándor Csoóri and Gyula Kodolányi. The poet and writer József Tornai called it "heavenly manna for our bodies starved for thought."<sup>20</sup>

Throughout the Cold War, book publishing activities were particularly important for the CIA, so it was not adverse to getting books published or distributed abroad, without revealing U.S. involvement, by covertly subsidizing politically significant foreign publications and national and international organizations for book publishing or distributing purposes. According to a former CIA officer, books were the most important weapons of strategic long-range propaganda. "Get books published or distributed abroad without revealing any U.S. influence," he suggested, "by covertly subsidizing foreign publications or booksellers. Get books published which should not be 'contaminated' by any covert tie-in with the U.S. government, especially if the position of the author is 'delicate.' Get books published for operational reasons regardless of commercial viability. Initiate and subsidize indigenous national or international organizations for book publishing or distributing purposes. Stimulate the writing of politically significant books by unknown foreign authors—either directly [...] or indirectly through literary agents or publishers."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> George Minden Memorandum to FEC President, May [1964] Highlights, dated June 10, 1964, 6. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Microfiche Provisional Box 3. No copies of Picon's book in Polish sent to Lithuania were received, although the receipt of other books mailed by the same sponsor was acknowledged. September [1963] Highlights, dated October 4, 1963, *ibid*.

<sup>20</sup> Károly Alexa, "Treasure Trove," *Magyar Hírlap*, September 19, 2007. Alexa found in the book an English slip from the Grand Central Paperback Book Shop in New York and apologized decades later in his article for not having sent it back.

<sup>21</sup> In 1967, the CIA suspended direct publication and subsidization of books and periodicals within the United States and its publishing activities were confined to books and other materials published abroad. Chief

For over three decades, George Minden was a master in this type of activity by selecting the right books and periodicals for the right occupational groups and the proper institutions in five communist East European countries, and later in the Soviet Union, where political and ideological censorship prevailed. In this manner, he provided the most convincing testimony to the lasting power of the book.

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of the CIA's Covert Action Staff to the Church Committee, in "Foreign and Military Intelligence, Book 1, Final Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, United States Senate Together With Additional Supplemental and Separate Views," April 26, 1976, 192-4 (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1976).





## CHAPTER 7

# New Opportunities through East-West Contacts

From its beginning, the Free Europe Committee was eager to establish and become actively engaged in contacts with the East. An unsigned office memorandum from 1959 dealt with the ways in which to conduct successful new operations in the field of East-West contacts by creating new instrumentalities and improving existing techniques. FEC recognized the fact that, because it was known as a “cold war propaganda organization,” it could only play a “small direct role in these contacts.” Many organizations, foundations, and universities active in the contacts field were reluctant to jeopardize their own contact programs through an open association with FEC. To have a chance of success, these contacts had to be conducted “indirectly through outside organizations,” such as the creation of the East Europe Institute, and the greater use of already supported exile groups, such as the Polish institutes, foundations, and libraries seeking to contact Polish scholars travelling in the West. At the same time, most of the exile organizations were considered “too political to be useful,” explaining the need for new organizations and new methods, such as expanded direct person-to-person distribution to East European visitors, negotiations with publishers, travel and research grants, scholarships, lecture tours, and symposia. Through intermediaries, FEC also arranged conferences designed to “attract specific groups from behind the Iron Curtain” such as writers, scholars, journalists, or translators.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Unsigned FEC Memorandum, dated June 21, 1959, 1–3. HIA, Sam Walker Collection, Box 8. Thanks to the U.S. State Department, FEC was well informed about the various exchanges between the East European coun-

Since the early 1960s, FEC's West European Operations Division (WEOD), through its offices in London and Paris, headed by Mucio Delgado and Eugene Metz, respectively, had already been conducting a variety of programs publicly disassociated from FEC. These activities included so-called East-West Contacts and additional means of reaching persons in the Captive Nations, as well as activities in Africa, Asia, and South America, which will not be addressed here. Publications were distributed through Sweden at the Eighth World Youth Festival in Helsinki on 28 July–6 August, 1962,<sup>2</sup> visits to England by Polish deputies were organized, and various publications in East European languages and in Russian were published in Vienna for distribution to visitors in Austria and through the Austrian legations in East Europe.<sup>3</sup> By 1963, FEC supported an impressive total of 70 organizations and publications, and between June 1962 and September 1965 contributed to no less than 180 international conferences, 138 of them in Western Europe. By 1965, FEC was assisting 22 East-West projects in seven West European countries, including the sponsorship of student seminars and summer schools, bringing in mostly young students, and financing the travel of selected writers to the West.<sup>4</sup>

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tries and the Free World, the number of East European tourists to the West, and that of delegations attending various conferences. Notes on Satellite-Free World Exchanges, January 30, 1959, 14–17. U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C.

<sup>2</sup> During and after the festival, a special staff was to distribute books shipped to Stockholm and Helsinki to delegates from Eastern Europe and from the uncommitted world in information centers, hand-to-hand, mailing, as well as by other means such as in hotels and conferences rooms. Books in Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, and Polish were given only to Soviet bloc delegates, together with records and fashion magazines. The President [FEC] to the Executive Committee, Publications Project for Helsinki Youth Festival, May 24, 1962. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 31.

<sup>3</sup> Following the visit to England of several deputies from the Polish ZNAK Catholic parliamentary group who made pro-regime statements, the CIA felt that "We are now on the losing end of most of these visits from the standpoints of both propaganda and information gains." Letter from The Executive Committee to The President [FEC], January 11, 1962, 1–2, and Mucio Delgado to John Richardson, July 2, 1962, *ibid*.

<sup>4</sup> Organizations and Publications Supported by FE, undated list from circa 1963, 1–2, and WEOD Survey of European East-West Contact Programs, John F. Leich to Richardson, February 24, 1965, 1–5, *ibid*. There were

WEOD was subsequently dissolved and some of its activities terminated as of July 1, 1965, and its Paris office, which administered scholarships and grants to East Europeans and East Europeans exiles in the West, was closed at the end of June 1966. The balance of the activities was transferred to New York and assigned to George Minden's PSPD. The RFE/RL Corporate Records include the microfiche copies of seven semi-annual reports on the East-West Contacts Program, covering the four-year period from July 1, 1965 through June 30, 1969, each averaging 25 to 30 pages in length and all written by Minden. These very detailed reports were divided into four parts: 1. A country-by-country description of East-West projects carried out in cooperation with outside organizations and individuals in various West European countries, including a special project for Polish visitors to France; 2. The student and youth program, involving scholarships and grants to East Europeans; 3. The labor program carried out by the ICFTUE (International Centre of Free Trade Unionists in Exile); and 4. Publications assisted, that is, partially subsidized, by PSPD. This aspect of the program, for which every dollar spent was accounted for, deserves a special mention because most of these émigré publications were also active in both the book mailing and distribution and in the East-West contacts programs.

The new program started with a one-year period of re-evaluation and closer supervision of all activities through the New York office, and regular field trips by PSPD personnel, with Minden going to Europe in the summer of 1965 to meet with all major organizations and individuals who cooperated with FEC in its East-West Contacts program. Similar inspection trips were made later by his executive assistant and the Polish and Hungarian national editors/plans advisors. Grants and scholarships to East Europeans in exile were terminated in order to expand those given to East Europeans. It was decided to utilize as many outside cover organizations as possible—foundations, societies, some exile groups (mainly Polish and a few Hungarian), and various organizations, book publishers, and individuals—and to keep Free Europe and its subsidies out of the picture completely. Many of these organi-

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seven such programs in Austria, six in France, three in England, two each in Switzerland and Sweden, and one each in Italy and Belgium. *Ibid.*

zations and individuals were already active and had proved themselves in the person-to-person book distribution program in Vienna, Rome, London, Paris, Munich, and Geneva. Moreover, international seminars, lectures tours, and conferences of writers and scholars held with indirect PSPD assistance, or congresses to which it contributed financially, also offered excellent opportunities for the distribution of books to East European participants. The texts of the symposium or congress discussions were later published in book form, purchased by PSPD, and distributed or mailed. Under this program, selected East European visitors also received travel and research grants. For example, PSPD contributed \$4,600 to cover the expenses of eleven East European delegates, among them Václav Havel and Gyula Illyés, to the June 1965 International PEN Congress in New York, which was also attended by the Russian exile novelist Valery Tarsis. Another example of this indirect support was the ICFTUE Congress held in Vienna in April 1966, attended by 35 delegates from Eastern Europe and the Baltic republics, to which PSPD contributed \$6,000. Support was also given to Zygmunt Kallenbach and the Polish YMCA in Geneva, the Polish School of Political and Social Sciences in London, and seminars in Vienna, Stockholm, Ghent, and Enkhuizen in the Netherlands. Minden was eager to revamp the program and exploit all new opportunities by improving existing instruments and techniques and trying new, more subtle institutional and operational forms and methods to enhance efficiency. For him, the main objective was to influence the minds and eventually the actions of selected East Europeans by exposing them to western democratic thought and ideas.<sup>5</sup>

Minden's next report covered the first year of the East-West project and marked the end of the period of reevaluation and reor-

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<sup>5</sup> George C. Minden, PSPD Director, Semi-Annual Report for July 1–December 31, 1965, on the PSPD's East-West Contacts Program, 1–24. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Microfiche Provisional Box 3. Minden's 1965 inspection tour took him to Rome, Vienna, Geneva, and Munich. Another trip followed in the summer of 1967, and many more would follow until 1990. This report and the following ones also list the publications supported by PSPD reviewed in Chapter 6 of this book. The ICFTUE, organized in Paris in 1948, was made up of former trade union leaders from all East European and Baltic countries, Albania, Yugoslavia, and Ukraine. It had contacts with East European labor leaders and since 1951 FEC was its main source of support. Unsigned FEC memorandum dated May 19, 1962, 1–2, *ibid.*

ganization. In some cases, projects were reduced, while a number of grant programs were discontinued. Nansen Haus in Vienna, operated by Kazimierz Knap, from whom FEC had officially “disassociated itself,” now received money from Minden to set up a guest room for Poles visiting Vienna and to give them books and periodicals. Polish, Hungarian, and Romanian organizations and individuals were included for the first time in Free Europe’s 1967 budget for the project. Financial assistance to Western organizations engaged in East-West contacts was to be used for specific projects, and to be matched by a corresponding contribution from their side. Minden admitted that the program “is by its nature a complicated affair. It is in reality not one but many separate programs carried out by different organizations and individuals spread out in various west European countries and in the United States and dealing with many individual East Europeans.” In his view, grants to selected “opinion leaders” for study in the West or participation in seminars or round-table discussions organized by West European organizations “constitute the heart of our program.” He listed the Austrian Literary Society, the Europahaus in Vienna, the ICFTUE, and the Esperienze Internazionali in Italy, as well as the International Advisory Council, the Wanda Roehr Foundation, and several universities in the United States. In line with his concept of ideological warfare, Minden described the program as one “based on faith—faith that the democratic way is the better way and that bringing east Europeans to the West, having them come into contact with a democratic society [...] will have repercussion on their future thinking and behavior [...] We can and must be selective in choosing the East Europeans we bring to the West; we can and must provide worthwhile, intellectually stimulating contacts for them during their stay in the West.” He advocated a wise selection of Western organizations, equal financial contribution on their part, and a careful supervision for all programs. He also stressed the importance of keeping covered the role of Free Europe in the file of East-West contacts and the “wisdom of increased discretion.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> George Minden, Free Europe Inc., Semi-Annual Report for July 1–December 31, 1965, on PSPD’s East-West Contact Program and Subsidized Publication, 1–28, *ibid.* A total of 50 grants and scholarships to East Europeans were provided at a cost of \$16,000.

Minden continued to refine the program during the second half of 1966, calling it “highly selective” and aimed at reaching “influential East Europeans established in their fields or well advanced in their studies [...] who are in a position to influence their associates in the community at large.” Such people included professors, economists, sociologists, writers, artists, journalists, and government planners. Working through established West European and American organizations and individuals, Minden was in constant search of new channels, stopping cooperation with organizations that had proved “unproductive,” and working with others, some of which had previously been assisted by FEC’s Paris and London offices. He described the project as “a fluid, constantly changing program dependent on outside organizations and individuals.” He called the East Europeans living in the West, and the organizations that were in regular contact with their compatriots managed by them, “service centers.” The achievements for this six-month period included study grants to one Czech and two Polish economists, one Hungarian and two Czech philosophers, and 26 Poles studying in the West. Support was also given through the Wanda Roehr Foundation to international conferences and seminars organized by the Europa Haus in Vienna. The project contributed \$4,000 to the 1966 Alpbach Forum organized by the Austrian College Society, at which the Jungbrunnen bookstore distributed some 300 political books to the 36 East European participants. Some support went to the Nansen Haus in Vienna, Pax Romana in Freiburg, Germany, the Hungarian émigré magazine *Magyar Műhely* (Hungarian workshop) in Paris, as well as the Polish Library and the Polish School of Political and Social Thought, both in London. Most of the grants were given to post-graduate East European students working toward doctoral degrees, and most of the subsidized magazines were distributed to East Europeans.<sup>7</sup>

Throughout 1967 and 1968, PSPD vigorously continued its East-West contacts activities without openly sponsoring them. Its role was to consider projects for which help was needed, to make suggestions and recommendations, and to reimburse the West European spon-

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<sup>7</sup> George Minden, Free Europe Inc., PSPD, Semi-Annual Report for July 1–December 31, 1966, on the East-West Contacts Program, 1–18. HIA, George Minden Collection, Box 3.

sors for their work and expenses after the project had been approved. The program was divided into three categories. Programs were carried out by reputable, independent “field organizations” with a basic interest in East-West contacts. They sponsored conferences and seminars to which they invited a select group of East Europeans, gave them study grants, and assisted East European visitors. These organizations included Esperienze Internazionali in Rome, concerned with cultural exchanges between countries; Europa Haus, the Austrian Literary Society, the Austrian College, and the newspaper *Die Furche* in Vienna; the International Pen in London; the *East European Quarterly* of the University of Colorado in Boulder; and Hamburg University. Some were Hungarian émigré organizations—*Magyar Műhely* in Paris, the Szepsi Csombor Literary Circle in London run by István Siklós, the Mikes Kelemen Circle in Tilburg, the Netherlands, headed by S. M. Németh, the Kossuth Foundation, and the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Science in New York. The so-called “service centers” consisted of Polish and Hungarian émigré organizations, acting independently of PSPD, which had contacts with their visiting compatriots and gave them books and periodicals. They included the Nansen Haus and the editorial office of the Hungarian émigré monthly *Magyar Híradó* in Vienna, the editorial office of the magazine *Új Látóhatár* in Munich, the Polish YMCA in Geneva, the Polish Youth Center run by the Benedictine priest Placyde Galiński, the Bibliothèque Polonaise, the Librairie Polonaise, Kultura managed by Jerzy Giedroyc, as well as the Galerie Lambert in Paris, the Polish School of Political and Social Sciences, the Polish Library, the Polish Ex-Combatants Association, and the Polish Christian Social Youth Federation in London. Finally, there were East-West contacts through the unofficial representative of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), for the publishing and distribution of articles on trade union developments in Eastern Europe.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> George C. Minden, Semi-Annual Report for July 1–December 31, 1967, on the East-West Contacts Program, 1–29, and Semi-Annual Report for January–June 30, 1968, on the East-West Contacts Program, 1–27. Each report gives the names of the large number of East European scholars, professors, and writers (over 230 in the first half of 1968) who benefited from the program. One of them was the Czech playwright Václav Havel, for whom two lectures were sponsored in New York.



Throughout the 1960s, the Galerie Lambert in Paris, run by Kazimierz Romanowicz and his wife Zofia, a talented author, remained a very important “service center.” It was visited by many Polish and Czechoslovak artists, as well as by painters from Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Lithuania, and even the Soviet Union. The owners developed a warm and continuing personal relationship with many of these East European artists and writers, and organized a series of art exhibitions of the works of modern Polish artists, young Czechoslovak painters, the Hungarian painter Tibor Csernus, and the Soviet painter Ely Bielutin. The Soviet poet Andrei Voznesensky also visited the Galerie in 1966 to see its art exhibit. A first attempt at having an exhibition of Czech abstract art in Paris, planned for 1964, had to be called off because of rigid Czech government cultural policies. It could be held a year later, while the Galerie did not succeed in arranging an exhibition of Lithuanian art. Many East European and a number of Soviet artists sent their works to Romanowicz, who regularly mailed his art catalogues and books to artists and art critics all over Eastern Europe, as well as to Polish universities and libraries. He also distributed many books to Polish and other East European visitors in the frame of the person-to-person project. The Galerie was frequently praised in the Polish press for its successful promotion of Polish art on the international scene. It is worth noting that Czechoslovak, Bulgarian, Lithuanian, and Soviet artists had to turn to a Polish art gallery in Paris to get their works known and even exhibited.<sup>9</sup>

The 1968 Alpbach Forum, sponsored by the Austrian College Society under the theme “Power-Law-Morals,” took place from August 17 to September 2 under the shadow of the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia. 45 to 50 East Europeans were among the 450 participants. As soon as the news of the invasion reached the Forum, many Czech and Slovak participants left for Vienna, where the philosopher Ivan Sviták penned a manifesto of protest that was signed

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<sup>9</sup> George Minden’s monthly, and afterwards bi-monthly Highlight Reports for the years 1963–1970 contain frequent references to the achievements of the Galerie Lambert and their very active managers Kazimierz Romanowski (1916–2010) and his wife Zofia (1922–2010). At times, the Galerie was visited by officials of the Czechoslovak and Bulgarian embassies in Paris in order “to spy out the land,” as Minden put it.

by some 130 Czechoslovak intellectuals who were in Vienna at the time. Sviták then flew to New York and started teaching at Columbia University. The *East European Quarterly* of the University of Colorado sponsored a conference on “Eastern Europe in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century,” held in Vienna in September 1968, with the attendance of 16 East European historians. The various “service centers” also hosted a large number of visitors. A stormy meeting of the International PEN Club in London was marked by the passage of a resolution urging the restoration of the Czech and Slovak writers’ freedom to engage in their art. The next meeting, scheduled for 1969 in Varna, Bulgaria, was cancelled in protest against the invasion.<sup>10</sup>

As appears from the last semi-annual report available in the Hoover Institution Archives, The Institute of Social Studies at The Hague gave grants of \$500 to two Czech economists and one Slovak engineer to enable them to attend its courses. More Czechoslovaks were assisted by the Institut d’Études Slaves in Paris, and by Father Karl Fort, a Czech Jesuit in Munich in charge of the spiritual care of Czechs and Slovaks in West Germany. 14 Polish and two Czechoslovak professors, writers, and historians were invited by the University of Geneva with the assistance of Zygmunt Kallenbach, and small grants were given through Ambassador Gaetan Morawski in Paris to assist Polish visitors in need. The Polish School of Political and Social Sciences in London, run by Jan Ostaszewski and the meeting place of many Polish visitors, shipped some 130 books to six academic libraries in Poland. Also, two major studies on Czechoslovakia were prepared by Karl Matal in Vienna.<sup>11</sup>

With the separation of PSPD from Free Europe, Inc., in 1970, the extensive East-West Contacts Program was also terminated, and with it the various grants and financial support for conferences and

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<sup>10</sup> George C. Minden, Semi-Annual Report for July 1–December 31, 1968, on the East-West Contacts Program, 1–29, *ibid.* PSPD contributed \$5,760 to the Albach Forum to finance the participation of the 35 East European participants, and \$2,500 to the conference organized by the University of Colorado in Vienna. The names of the various East European grant recipients and the amounts they received are also listed in the report.

<sup>11</sup> George C. Minden, Semi-Annual Report for January 1–June 30, 1969, on the East-West Contacts Program, 1–31, and 14 enclosures, *ibid.*

seminars. However, Minden continued to run some of his operations through many of the same sponsors and “service centers” in existence throughout the 1960s. This was in particular the case for the person-to-person book distribution program and the financial support for émigré newspapers and magazines, which continued throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Minden never gave up Free Europe’s nor his own ultimate objective, namely to help East Europeans move toward an open, democratic society and self-determination, and to expose them through books to Western democratic thought and developments in all fields.

## CHAPTER 8

# The Early 1970s

### *The International Advisory Council*

Minden's PSPD semi-annual report for the period 1 January to 30 June 1970, the last report he submitted to Free Europe's new President William Durkee,<sup>1</sup> was based on a survival budget of \$419,985, 33% less than the \$619,858 budgeted in the first half of 1969. This made it possible to distribute roughly 111,000 books and periodicals to approximately 39,000 persons and institutions in six countries of East Europe, 14% less than in the second half of 1969. There was a decrease in the number of books in each distribution method, with the exception of personalized mailings, which totaled 1,841. At the same time, the effectiveness of the program did not suffer, and the receipt of 36,594 copies of the 68,137 items mailed (72%) was acknowledged in writing, while a further 41,000 items were distributed person-to-person. In addition, two books in Polish and one in Hungarian were published, but no more commitments for future assistance were made.

The distribution of books and periodicals to the three small Baltic republics was practically abandoned, except for 331 gift books mailed to Latvia, and the acknowledgements of receipt of 70 books by Latvian libraries. However, future requests for books would still be met and book distributors would continue to hand out publications to Baltic visitors to the West. The Baltic area was considered

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<sup>1</sup> William P. Durkee (1918–?), a Yale graduate, served in the U.S. State Department and in the Defense Department before joining RFE in 1967 in Germany. He was President of Free Europe, Inc. from 1970 to 1975.

sensitive from the start of the mailing project, but it was hoped that through careful planning and control the Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian sectors of the Iron Curtain could be pierced and that the Baltic people would at some point be free again. Launched in December 1956 with the mailing of 500 copies of a cross reporting on Poland to each Baltic republic, from the start the program ran into very rigid Soviet postal censorship. In the first 13 months, 41 titles in roughly 14,500 copies were mailed to Latvia, 38 titles in 10,300 copies to Estonia, and 34 titles in 7,200 copies to Lithuania. The responses amounted to a meager 14 acknowledgements from each of the three target countries, and two book requests from Lithuania.<sup>2</sup> In the next two years, FEP mailed more titles in less copies, and closed the period 1958–1959 with roughly 26,000 books in 225 titles sent to Latvia, 21,000 books in 210 titles to Estonia, and 16,000 books in 175 titles to Lithuania. In all, it received 423 responses from Estonia, 127 from Latvia, and 53 from Lithuania, from both institutions and individuals.<sup>3</sup> When the hopes for an increase in the number of acknowledgement and request letters failed to materialize, the number of publications and titles sent was gradually cut back between 1964 and 1970, from roughly 2,000 to 400 copies to Estonia (or 0.1% of all books sent), from 1,000 to 700 for Latvia (0.3%), and from 825 to 480 (0.2%) for Lithuania. In 1969, only 121 letters arrived for 1,250 books sent to the three Baltic countries, and 51 letters for 330 books sent in the first half of 1970.<sup>4</sup> Radio Liberty, which was covertly sending books to the USSR, including a limited amount to the Baltic republics, most probably continued the Baltic

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<sup>2</sup> Free Europe Press Mailing Operations, Monthly Report No. 17, December 1957, 1–2. Courtesy of John P. C. Matthews.

<sup>3</sup> FEOP, Mailings Operations, Monthly Report No. 41, December 1959, 1, *ibid.* Issues of the émigré journal *Baltic Review* and books in Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian were also sent. Books were distributed person-to-person to Lithuanian visitors to the West and to Latvian tourists and sailors in London, as well as through personalized distribution to Estonia through Helsinki.

<sup>4</sup> George C. Minden, Free Europe, Inc., Publications & Special Projects Division, Office of the Director. Undated Semi-Annual Report Calendar 1970 (First Half), The Book Distribution Program, Annex #1.

mailings until the Soviet program was taken over by George Minden in 1975.<sup>5</sup>

Minden correctly assumed that readership was undoubtedly higher than the simple number of recipients. Teachers wrote that they used the books they received in class, and reading circles passed them from hand to hand. Because many of the books sent were reviewed in newspapers and journals, some of the ideas they contained were certain to reach very wide circles. "Such is the durable nature of books," Minden wrote, "that they can be expected to last for years, and it is not too much to assume that our books come before the eyes of several million readers over the years." Even with an actual expenditure of \$226,460 on books and periodicals, PSPD managed to distribute 39% more copies than had been expected. It was able to minimize the effects of the reevaluation of the German Mark and the rising prices in France, the UK, and the U.S. with the help of higher discounts offered by book publishers, bulk purchasing, more purchases of paperback books, several gifts of books by West European publishers, and a USIA donation of 12,000 books. As in previous reports, Minden noted the average cost of each book and periodical sent, including all overhead—salaries and fees, rents, office supplies and maintenance, postage and telephones, as well as the actual cost of the books purchased—coming up with \$3.78 as compared to \$4.50 in the second half of 1969.<sup>6</sup>

This report reflected the financial vicissitudes of the book distribution project and the valiant efforts made by Minden to keep the project afloat and going despite its growing costs. All his reports included detailed budgetary figures, and he made eloquent budget presentations to the FE/RFE's top managers and Executive Board of Directors. Both RFE and RL were going through very difficult years after the leftist

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<sup>5</sup> There was agreement between the FEC and the CIA that no additional PSPD effort targeting the Baltic area was needed. Letter from The Executive Committee to The President [FE], dated December 13, 1965, 3, and letter from The President [FE] to The Executive Committee, December 17, 1965, 8. It was suggested that Minden consult in the matter with Radio Liberty. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 32.

<sup>6</sup> George C. Minden, Semi-Annual Report, Calendar 1970 (First Half), The Book Distribution Program, Free Europe Inc. Publications and Special Projects Division, Office of the Director, 1–74, plus six appendixes, 1–24. HIA, George Minden Collection, Box 1.

journal *Ramparts* revealed in 1967 that the CIA gave covert support to various American organizations, and the committee headed by Undersecretary of State Nicholas Katzenbach recommended the termination of all covert funding and support for American private organizations. These were years of uncertainty, made more difficult by vehement attacks from Senators Clifford Case and William Fulbright. With the backing of President Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger and the State Department, and the majority of the U.S. Congress, the Radios were finally able in 1972 to secure a new financing arrangement through U.S. Treasury funding, and to continue their broadcasts.<sup>7</sup>

This major change led to the elimination of FEC's all non-radio activities in order to save money and jettison all covert operations. Following long and hard negotiations, the transfer of Minden's PSPD to another location in New York became effective on July 1, 1970. There, he became President of the International Advisory Council, Inc., an already existing fictitious CIA organization until then run by Ethel Schroeder, who had served with the Office of Strategic Studies (OSS) and the U.S. Information Agency.<sup>8</sup> In 1957, Schroeder began writing letters to FEC's management offering her cooperation, which was accepted by Walker and later by Richardson. In 1962, the extremely security-conscious Minden asked for a preliminary check on IAC's 12-member Board of Directors, and the Lithuanian Committee in New York even suspected IAC of "communist front activity" after the former refused to divulge any information about itself.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> For a comprehensive review of this period, see Johnson, *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty. The CIA Years and Beyond*, chapter 8, 202–21. See also Memorandum From the Secretary of the 303 Committee (Jessup) to President Johnson, Washington, September 25, 1967, 1–7, and Memorandum From Director of Central Intelligence Agency Helms to President Johnson, November 14, 1967, 1–2, online at [www.state.gov/about\\_state/history/vol\\_xvii/b.html](http://www.state.gov/about_state/history/vol_xvii/b.html).

<sup>8</sup> Located at 45 East 65<sup>th</sup> Street in New York. In an undated three-page pamphlet, IAC's activities were listed as "International public relations consultation and Project development and management." HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 215.

<sup>9</sup> Ethel Schroeder, IAC, to Bernard Yarrow, FEC, July 30, 1957; Schroeder to Richardson, June 14, 1961; letter from McEvoy to Minden, March 7, 1962; and unsigned letter dated April 26, 1962, on the Lithuanian Committee's refusal to cooperate with the IAC, *ibid*.

Throughout the 1960s, IAC acted as one of the main covert sponsors of the book project and as a buffer between the FEC and the American publishers. Bills incurred by PSPD would be paid by IAC, and everything went through Schroeder, so the choice was not coincidental. The transfer from Free Europe to IAC, whose funding now came from a company registered in Liberia, reduced the program's visibility to the communist regimes. Many of the American and European publishers and sponsors must have been aware that the funds came either from Free Europe or some U.S. government agency, while many East European recipients suspected UNESCO was behind the book mailings. With all purchase orders, billings and payments, phone and letter correspondence going through IAC, this arrangement allowed publishers to maintain that they were unaware of Free Europe's involvement. Throughout the 1970s, Minden also used many cover names for his mailings, such as International Book Center or International Literary Center, whose first mailing address was that of a Hungarian information analyst in Connecticut.<sup>10</sup>

The Hoover Institution Archives hold six semi-annual IAC reports prepared by Minden, starting with the second half of 1970, two reports for 1971, two for 1972, and one for the first half of 1973. This would indicate that the money for the book project was provided on a bi-yearly basis, based on the results achieved during the preceding half-year. Minden made regular trips to Washington to fight for his project, and he would return fairly exhausted to his New York office. Unfortunately, the remainder of his book distribution reports is missing, presumably kept in some U.S. government archive. Whether they were returned to Washington when, in 1991, Minden was asked to hand over his files to his government sponsor, or whether they were destroyed, does not really matter. Thanks to Minden's very detailed semi-annual reports it is still possible to follow the achievements of the book distribution project until 30 June 1973. All these reports list the country-by-country results, the profession of the book recipients

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<sup>10</sup> On the financial aspect of the transfer, see "Option Agreement between Ethel Schroeder (Seller) and George Minden (Purchaser)," July 27, 1970, New York, by which Minden purchased 100 shares of the capital stock of IAC, Inc. at a price of \$200 per share. HIA, George Minden Collection, Box 1.



and the names of the most prominent ones, the select titles scheduled and mailed according to book category, the select titles mailed to each country in response to requests, and quotes from the most interesting letters. In this chapter, only the most important features of these six IAC reports will be mentioned, with additional information in subsequent chapters.

The first report George Minden signed as IAC President and most probably sent directly to Washington covered the second half of 1970. With a budget of \$882,073, 14.3% higher than in the preceding six months, he was able to distribute almost 110,000 books and periodicals, a figure comparable to that of the first half of the year. These books cost \$254,924 or an average of \$2.32 apiece, with the USIA donating less than 9,000 books. Students were the largest group to receive books (about one quarter of all recipients), persons in influential positions made up 7.5% of the recipients, and libraries and schools 15%. IAC had proof that 68.4% of the books distributed had been received (30,330 of the 65,065 books mailed), 43,586 distributed person-to-person, and 1,166 personalized mailings, or 75,082 out of the 109,817 publications distributed. Poland received 36,041 books (32.8%), Hungary 24,346 (22.2%), and Czechoslovakia 20,019 (18.2%).<sup>11</sup>

The report contained an interesting comment about book mailings to Transylvania: "One area where in the past there was little response to our mailings was among the Magyars in Transylvania, who seldom acknowledged Hungarian-language books. In the last twelve months or so, however, we have received acknowledgements of receipt for such émigré Hungarian works as *Római muzsika* (Roman music) by László Cs. Szabó and *Szabó Dezső* by Gyula Gombos, and Hungarian translations like *Korunk szellemi körképe* edited by Gaëtan Picon. In contrast, there has never been the same unresponsiveness among Transylvania's Saxons, among whom we have circulated books in German without

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<sup>11</sup> George C. Minden, IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, July 1 to December 31, 1970, 1–51, and Statistics for the Months of July–August 1970, 1–65. HIA, George Minden Collection, Box 1. The report and all following ones give the names the writers of the most interesting letters received, and include on separate lists the names of the most prominent individuals and institutions that received books in each target country. 209 books or 0.3% of the total distribution were sent to the Baltic Republics.

difficulty.” Over the years, Western literature also reached Hungarian writers and professors through universities, faculties, and professional organizations, and periodicals such as *Kortárs* in Romania and *Új Szó* in Slovakia. The names of the most important ethnic Hungarian recipients can be easily identified in the sections on those two countries.<sup>12</sup>

In the first half of 1971, IAC distributed a total of 116,000 books to roughly 35,000 individuals and institutions in its five target countries, plus 58 to the Baltic republics, 5% more than in either half of 1970. 43,375 books and periodicals, or 60.4% of the total, were distributed person-to-person, and written acknowledgements were received for 29,465 of the 71,076 books mailed, providing reliable evidence that 74,415 or 64.5% of the total 116,026 books and periodicals distributed were received. Poland received 31% of the books distributed, Czechoslovakia 23.4%, and Hungary 23%. A total of 7,270 USIA books, as compared to 10,100 in the second half of 1970, and close to 12,000 newspapers and periodicals were distributed. Students were again the largest single group of recipients, comprising more than 20% of the acknowledgements of receipt for books mailed and more than 20% of the East European visitors who received books in the West. Minden was confident that most of the books whose receipt was not acknowledged had reached their destination or the flourishing black market mentioned in the July 5, 1971 issue of *Newsweek*. More senior party and government leaders, such as the vice-president of the Council of State, the governor of the National Bank, the chairman of the Academy of Social and Political Sciences, and many members and alternate members of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, wrote to IAC from Romania than from any other target country. In addition, the report listed the titles of several works written by Hungarian émigré authors mailed to Hungary in response to requests.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 16. The report listed the distribution of seven books in Polish, six in Hungarian, and one in Czech. Of the 22 periodicals, six were in French, three in German, three in Polish (*Kultura*, *Na Antenie*, *Wiadomości*), five in Czech (*České slovo*, *Listy*, *Naše snahy*, *Promeny*, *Svědectví*), and five in Hungarian (*Irodalmi Újság*, *Magyar Híradó*, *Mérleg*, *Új Európa*, and *Új Látóhatár*). Ibid., 51.

<sup>13</sup> George C. Minden, IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, January 1 to June 30, 1971, 1–48, *ibid.* The names of the first three Romanian top officials appear on page 18 of the report.

In the second half of 1971, IAC distributed nearly 118,000 books and periodicals to its five East European target countries (with nine to the Baltic countries), 1.5% more than in the previous six months. Of these, 53,142 or 45% were distributed person-to-person and 2,177 through personalized mailings. Poland continued to lead with 44,464 books and periodicals (37.7%), while Hungary moved up to second place (21.3%), followed by Czechoslovakia (19.5%), Romania (16.2%), and Bulgaria (5.3%). Poland registered an 81% increase in the number of books mailed in response to requests. Expenditures were \$589,236, 6.4% more than in the first half of the year, and the average cost of delivering each book rose to \$5.10 from \$4.77 in the first half of 1971, partly because of the devaluation of the U.S. dollar. IAC also distributed 7,250 books it received free of charge from the USIA. As usual, the largest group of recipients were students, who accounted for some 44% of all requests received, followed by teachers, writers, critics, philosophers, and artists. Based on the number of mailed books acknowledged plus the number of books handed out to East European visitors to the West, Minden could report that 77% of the books distributed were known to have reached their targets. Many of those not acknowledged may have found their way into second-hand bookshops or the black market, as relatively few books were intercepted by the authorities or confiscated altogether.<sup>14</sup>

During the first half of 1972, a total of approximately 110,000 books and periodicals were distributed, 7,800 or 6.7% less than in the previous six months, at a total cost of \$570,989 and an average cost of \$5.56 per book—a 9.2% increase due to higher postage and handling charges and the reevaluation of European currencies. 7,250 gift books were received from the USIA. Close to 36,000 books (32.6%) went to Poland. Political titles accounted for 51.6% of all scheduled mailings and 72.8% of all person-to-person distribution, and 40% of

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<sup>14</sup> George C. Minden, IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, July 1 to December 31, 1971, 1–44, and Statistics for the Months of September–October 1971, 1–8, *ibid.* Works by Teilhard de Chardin and Gaëtan Picon were mailed on request to Hungary, and *Rozmowy z Kremlem* [Talks with the Kremlin] by Stanislaw Kot was mailed to Poland. 14 American and British, two French, three Polish, three Hungarian, and two Czech newspapers and magazines were also distributed.

the books requested by Poles were political. Publications in Polish (2,800) accounted for about one-tenth of all distribution to Poland. Hungary received roughly 23,000 books or 21% of the total, versus a population percentage of 12.1%. The share of books distributed to Czechoslovakia (with a population percentage of 16.9%) continued to decline as a result of the hardline policies of the Gustav Husák regime. After dropping to third place behind Hungary in the second half of 1971, it now yielded third place to Romania. 37,281 books were given out directly through the person-to-person program, a decrease of 29.9% as compared to the second half of 1971. There was no slackening in responsiveness, and written acknowledgements were received for 26,884 of the 70,595 books mailed. Students continued to be the largest group of recipients, followed by teachers. The USIA donated some 8,000 books distributed, and roughly 2,100 books were distributed by personalized mailings, many of them hand-delivered by American scholars and specialists who requested them. 85% of the mostly political periodicals taken by Hungarian visitors to the West were in Hungarian, and more were scheduled to meet the demand. Romania had the largest increase in total distribution of any target country, and requests from that country accounted for 62.5% of all requests from all the target countries. As a result of Bulgaria's tight censorship, more than half of all requests received came from institutions, more than from any other country. Bulgarian book distributors in Munich and Frankfurt ceased their operations in early 1972. Select and personalized mailings included 16 books in Russian by authors such as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Boris Pasternak, Nikolai Berdyaev, Mikhail Bulgakov, Zhores A. Medvedev, Andrei Amalrik, Pyotr G. Grigorenko, and Mikhail Zoshcheno, and two Czech books by Jaroslav Brodský and Josef Škvovecký.<sup>15</sup>

The report for the second half of 1972 listed a total of 120,325 books and periodicals distributed, 9.3% more than in the previous half-year, and noted an increase in distribution to Hungary and Bulgaria

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<sup>15</sup> George C. Minden, IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, January 1 to June 30, 1972, 1–64, *ibid.* The report listed some 20 distribution points in eight West European countries and one for Hungarian visitors in Novi Sad, Yugoslavia, with Vienna, Paris, London, and Rome remaining the most important ones.

and a marked decrease to Czechoslovakia. Total expenditures rose 7.3% to \$612,985, and the average cost of distribution was reduced through lower mailing charges, with the virtual elimination of registration, a measure expected to negatively affect the rate of acknowledgements. Roughly 11,400 books were received free of charge from the USIA and the U.S. publisher Simon & Schuster. 55,918 books were distributed person-to-person, a 50% increase over the first half of 1972. The number of books mailed in response to requests decreased by 17.3% and that of unscheduled books by 14.2%. Students remained the largest single group of book recipients (25.5%), followed by teachers (18.2%). 28,747 of the 63,109 books mailed, or 45.6%, had been acknowledged. By adding the books directly given out person-to-person, Minden was certain that at least 71% of everything distributed reached the hands of its targets. Poland's share was 37.5%, Hungary's 22.8%, and Czechoslovakia's and Romania's 16% each. Bulgaria's share rose slightly to 7.6%, and during the entire year 1972, there were twice as many scheduled mailings (roughly 4,000 books and periodicals) to that country than in 1971. 80% of the acknowledgements received from Bulgaria came from a few main libraries in Sofia, as well as from the libraries of various research institutes. 59 East European government and party officials took a total of 159 books and periodicals, far more per head than any other group. The report noted that proportionally, Hungarians requested twice as many books on religion as any other East European nationality. Requests from Romania accounted to 47.5% of requests received from all target countries, one third of them for books on literature and another third on language and education. A larger proportion of the person-to-person distribution was in East European languages: one-third in Polish, about 15% in Hungarian, Czech, and Slovak, and 1.1% in Russian.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> George C. Minden, IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, July 1 to December 31, 1972, 1–78. Select individual recipients included the names of 27 Poles, 50 Czechs and Slovaks, 47 Hungarians, 48 Romanians, and 37 Bulgarians. *Ibid.*, 34–50. Select titles distributed to East European visitors included works by Nadezhda Mandelshtam and Vasily Kandinsky in Russian, Jaroslav Brodský, Radoslav Selucký, and Andrei Amalrik in Czech, István Bibó, Gyula Gombos, Gyula Borbándi, and József Molnár in Hungarian, and Sławomir Mrożek, Władysław Bieńkowski, Marian Kukiel, Witold Gombrowicz, Ewa Wacowska, and Franciszek Arcziszewski in Polish.

The last IAC report available covers the first half of 1973 and listed a total of 105,605 books and periodicals distributed, 12.2% less than in the previous half year. The total included 9,671 books donated by the USIA. The report noted a decrease for Czechoslovakia and Romania, and very little change in the case of Hungary and Poland. Expenditures were listed as \$649,189, a 5.6% increase over the second half of 1972 due to higher distribution costs. With 42,415 books distributed to East European visitors, person-to-person was IAC's most important method of distribution. More than half of these books and periodicals were in East European languages (roughly 24.5% in Hungarian, 18% in Czech, 10% in Polish, 1% in Slovak, and a handful in Russian). 23,085 books were mailed in response to requests, 3,497 were mailed individually on IAC initiative, and 1,719 were distributed as personalized mailings. Out of a total of 105,605 books mailed and distributed, Poland received 35,344 (33.5%), Hungary 22,936 (21.7%), Romania 19,756 (18.7%), Czechoslovakia 19,220 (18.2%), and Bulgaria 8,349 (7.9%). For the first time since 1970, there was a drop in the letters of acknowledgment from Poland, due to a decrease in the number of books sent there. More than half of the books requested from Poland were political. Receipt of 57% of the books mailed to Hungary was acknowledged, while the number of Hungarian request letters declined. Romanians were sending twice as many letters of request as letters of acknowledgement. The report listed the names of 44 prominent Poles, among them Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, Mieczysław Rakowski, Antoni Słonimski, and Gerard Labuda, 29 prominent Czechs and Slovaks, including Václav Havel and František Tomášek, 44 Hungarians, among them János Kornai, József Bognár, Miklós Szabolcsi, and György Ránki, 37 Romanians, and 51 Bulgarians, along with the names of the most important institutions and periodicals that received books in all five target countries. Of the 22 periodicals distributed on a regular basis, 11 were American, three British, two French, two Czech, two Hungarian, one Polish, and one Swiss.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> George C. Minden, IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, January 1 to June 30, 1973, 1–83, *ibid.* Excerpts from Romanian reports donated by Ioana Alimanestianu can be found in the chapters on letters received from Romania and in the chapters on censorship.

Thanks to the IAC reports for the period July 1, 1971 until June 30, 1973, it is possible to name the most important western and émigré books and authors mailed and/or distributed to East Europeans: Theodor Adorno, Andrei Amalrik, Hannah Arendt, Raymond Aron, Max Beloff, Isaiah Berlin, Heinrich Böll, Charles Bohlen, Willy Brandt, Zbigniew Brezinski, Adam Bromke, Alastair Buchan, Robert Conquest, Robert Dahl, Ralf Dahrendorf, Yuli Daniel, Norman Davies, Milovan Djilas, Maurice Duverger, Amitai Etzioni, John Galthraith, Roger Garaudy, Witold Gombrowicz, Walter Hallstein, Robert Havemann, Friedrich Hayek, Robert Heilbroner, Marek Hłasko, Aldous Huxley, Alex Inkeles, Karl Jaspers, George F. Kennan, Robert F. Kennedy, Karl Kerényi, Henry Kissinger, Arthur Koestler, Pavel Kohout, Leszek Kołakowski, Leopold Labedz, Walter Laqueur, Paul Lendvai, George Lichtheim, Richard Löwenthal, Konrad Lorenz, Nadezhda Mandelstam, Jacques Maritain, Zhores and Roy Medvedev, Ladislav Mňačko, Lewis Mumford, Reinhold Niebuhr, Margaret Mead, George Orwell, Boris Pasternak, Jiří Pelikan, Gaëtan Picon, Jean Piaget, Karl Polányi, Lucian Pye, Jean-François Revel, Eugene W. Rostow, Bertrand Russell, Marshall Shulman, Ota Šik, Andrei Sin-yavsky, Marc Slonim, Altiero Spinelli, Michel Tatu, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Lionel Trilling, Walt Rostow, Alexander Solzhenytsin, Arnold Toynbee, Adam Ulam, Max Weber, René Wellek, and many, many more. In one short sentence: the best the West could offer.

## CHAPTER 9

# A Lasting Enemy

### PART I: THE CENSORS 1956 TO 1968

Much has been written about the internal state censorship system of the East European communist regimes modelled after the system launched by the Bolsheviks as early as October–November 1917. Emulating the Soviet model of central censorship office established in 1922, known as “Glavlit,” the authorities achieved within their borders complete state control over the press and all communication media by being the sole providers of everything needed by the publishing industry. This economic control, from printing presses and typewriters to newsprints, also applied to periodicals and publishing houses. In fact, censorship was not even needed because nothing could be printed that did not suit the communist regimes. Yet it was still useful as a means of double-checking and double screening. Only with the advent of the Russian model of *samizdat* literature in the 1970s and 1980s in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary did a form of private publishing emerge in defiance of the state prohibition to own capital and material means for the mass production of intellectual products. Genuine freedom of the press occurred briefly during the 1968 Prague Spring period in Czechoslovakia and later in 1980–1981, when the Solidarity labor union was allowed to operate publicly.

As a result of censorship, contradictions and compromises governed literature, theatre, and films under communist rule. The creators of cultural life were both censored and kept satisfied for decades by a variety of means. Membership in the official writers’ union and toeing the party line provided material security through a steady job and guaranteed income in the form of state subsidies. In some cases, writers,



artists, and filmmakers were bought off and/or forced to exercise self-censorship by keeping views critical of or divergent from “socialist realism” out of their works. Finally, coercion or suppression awaited those who did not echo the party line. For several decades, Eastern Europe’s writers, playwrights, and filmmakers spent considerable creative energy on finding arrangements with the guardians of culture and/or cleverly slipping political points past the censors’ vigilance in their books, plays, and films.<sup>1</sup>

The large-scale mailing of Western and émigré books in the second half of the 1950s, followed in the early 1960s by the even larger hand-to-hand distribution of such books to East European visitors to the West, represented another major challenge for the communist regimes’ cultural watchdogs. Many, if not most of these books, could not be printed, were unavailable, or, in the case of works by émigrés, were outright banned. Throughout the existence of the book program, one of its most enduring aspects was the cat-and-mouse game between two quasi-invisible antagonists. On one side were the many providers of uncensored printed matter in the Free World. These providers included hundreds of existing book publishers, libraries, and academic institutions, less numerous fictitious organizations set up to prevent the identification of the actual source, and a sizeable contingent of book distributors, most of them in Western Europe. The distribution of a steadily growing flow of Western books and periodicals, many of them banned, from such a large number of seemingly unconnected sources to a growing number of individuals and institutions behind the Iron Curtain aimed at both confusing and overwhelming, through its sheer size and scope, the declared enemies of free thought and expression. On the other side of Europe’s intellectual and cultural divide stood the

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<sup>1</sup> Lettrich, *The Writers in Eastern Europe*. See also George Schöpflin, ed., *Censorship and Political Communication in Eastern Europe* (London: Francis Pinter, 1993), and George Gömöri, “Censorship in Communist Ruled Countries from 1945 to 1989 (A Survey),” paper delivered at the International Conference “Censorship as a Creative Force? Central Europe 1944–1989,” UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies, London, April 25, 2008. See also the papers by Miklós Haraszti and István Hegedűs on censorship in Hungary, John Bates on censorship in Poland, and Antonín Liehm and Jan Čulík on censorship in Czechoslovakia. Ibid. On freedom of the press, see Evers, *Liberty of the Press under Socialism*, 94–103.

phalanxes of vigilant Polish, Czechoslovak, Hungarian, Romanian, and Bulgarian postal censors and customs inspectors, whose mission was to protect the communist ideological and cultural ghetto against the undesirable intrusion of “subversive,” “revisionist,” “bourgeois,” and “diversionary” literature from the “imperialist West.”

Throughout the decades, each side remained out of view of the other, but the Western side managed to gather sufficient information and evidence about the activities and guidelines of the censors. Its best sources and helpers were the East Europeans themselves: those who acknowledged in writing the receipt or reported the non-receipt of the books mailed to them. East European visitors to the West also shared their experiences with Minden’s numerous book distributors, many of them East European émigrés with friends behind the Iron Curtain. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the full opening of Eastern Europe’s borders with the West and the various East European national archives, a much better knowledge has emerged about the structure, *modus operandi*, and directives of the various communist censorship systems. One noteworthy exception prior to 1989 was Tomasz Strzyzewski, an official of the censor’s office in Kraków, who in February 1977 smuggled to Sweden some 700 pages of classified documents, pertaining to internal Polish censorship and its complex bureaucratic apparatus under Edward Gierek’s regime from 1975 to February 1977. The documents were quickly published in Polish (“Czarna Księga Cenzury PRL,” or “The Black Book of Polish Censorship”) in London by the émigré quarterly *Aneks*, and then translated into English and published in the U.S. in 1984.<sup>2</sup> They included lists of 58 individuals, among them the Polish commentators of Radio Free Europe and the BBC, and writers and editors of émigré journals such as the Paris-based *Kultura* and the London-based *Orzet Bialy* (White eagle). In retrospect, one can only wonder about the number of postal censors, customs inspectors, and library watchdogs still alive, retired or not, in Warsaw, Prague, Bratislava, Budapest,

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<sup>2</sup> Leftwich Curry, ed., *The Black Book of Polish Censorship*. See also “Czarna Księga Cenzury (The Black Book of Polish Censorship). Polish censorship documents 1974–77,” in Jones, ed., *Censorship: A World Encyclopedia*, Vol. I, 619–20. Also in the same book, “Censorship in Poland in the Twentieth Century,” online at <http://www2.arts.gla.ac.uk/Slavonic/staff/Polcen20c.html>.

Bucharest, Sofia, and other larger Central East European cities, whose duty it was to screen the incoming flood of Western literature or to intercept at the state borders of socialism the works deemed dangerous to the official ideology. Perhaps one or more of these former censors or some of their higher party supervisors will one day be willing to emerge from anonymity and write down their personal experiences.

According to Article 59 of the Universal Postal Convention, any country could legally reject material if it did not approve of its circulation within its borders. Minden entertained no illusions about the challenges the book program faced with postal and customs censorship, and possible confiscation. He was privy to information provided on a number of occasions by the CIA to the Free Europe Committee. At the end of 1957, the Executive Committee passed on detailed information about the methods of postal censorship in Hungary up to the 1956 Revolution, under the assumption that the same method was still being applied. The report listed three branch offices in Budapest for all printed matter and books from England, France, and West Germany, with a daily flow of about 200 pieces, and a fourth for mail from other West European countries, mainly Switzerland, Italy, and Sweden, with a daily flow of about 50 pieces. According to the CIA, "Actual censorship was carried out behind closed doors by AVOs" [State Protection Department] and conducted "on a 'spot' basis." The techniques used were not known, but publications from western Communist Parties and technical publications "appeared to be passed automatically."<sup>3</sup> Advice was also received about the preferable size of the books mailed. Instead of bulky items, paperbacks "would perhaps be cheaper, and would also be less conspicuous. It might thus get through the bloc censors more easily."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Eliot B. Judane to Helen for George T. [Truitt, alias Trutnovsky], November 19, 1957. HIA, FFE/RL Corporate Records. The AVO was the equivalent of Hungary's secret police.

<sup>4</sup> The Executive Committee to The President [FEC], Attn: Mr. Minton, May 12, 1959, *ibid.* In 1960, the CIA drew the FEC's attention to "an amateurish forgery" by a Polish schoolteacher who proposed "to raise hell with the censorship" and whose sender was ultimately located in the Polish Embassy in Rangoon. The Executive Committee to the President [FEC], Attn: Mr. Minden, February 3, 1960, *ibid.*

In Czechoslovakia, the communist regime closed most non-communist periodicals and newspapers after 1948 and banned the importation of foreign magazines and newspapers. In order to isolate the country from the outside world, its censors regularly checked private letters, especially when directed abroad. From February 1950 onwards, any letter to be posted abroad had to have a return address. The sender had to deliver it to the post office in person, and his or her identity was to be verified by an ID. This very strict form of censorship was eventually relaxed in the early 1960s, but it remained theoretically in force until 1968.

The main tool of the Czechoslovak State Security Service (ŠtB) that was used to eliminate subversive enemy materials was strong censorship. Members of the Sixth Administration of the Ministry of the Interior, which was part of the ŠtB, checked postal items and opened mail sent from abroad. The First Administration of the Ministry of the Interior quickly obtained information about the book project from its informer “Jachym,” alias Oldřich Lauřim, a Radio Free Europe announcer in Munich. On September 1, 1956, the intelligence service suggested a countermeasure, namely to expose the project in the press and to publicize copies of seized postal items.<sup>5</sup> A report dated February 17, 1958, submitted by minister of the interior Rudolf Barák (1915–1995) to the Politburo of the Central Committee of the KSČ (Communist Party of Czechoslovakia), provides concrete information about the sending of enemy materials to Czechoslovakia from July 21, 1957 until December 31, 1957. During that period, 145 kinds of printed materials, totaling 24,593 pieces, were sent to Czechoslovakia. “Few exceptions were delivered to the recipients, the rest was taken out from postal traffic and some measures [sic] were taken.” The materials included Tigrid’s *Svědectví* and journals such as *Die Frau, Bauen und Wohnen*, bookshop and perfume [sic] advertisements, and hobby journals.<sup>6</sup> A 1987 dis-

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<sup>5</sup> ABS (Security Services Archives), Subject File of First Administration on RFE, No. 10081/012. Oldřich Lauřim was a real agent sent to Munich in 1955 to infiltrate Radio Free Europe. He retired in 1986 and was exposed only after the fall of communism. On ŠtB actions against RFE, see Tomek, *Objekt Alfa*.

<sup>6</sup> ABS, Fund A 2/1. Secretary of the minister of the interior, Inventory No. 1187, 1–71. Courtesy of Prokop Tomek (1965–), historian and senior researcher at the Military History Institute in Prague.

sertation authored by First Lieutenant Vlastimil Löbl of the College of the Corps of National Security, ŠtB faculty, history of the KPČ department, bore the title *The Fight of the Czechoslovak ŠtB Against Ideological Activities aimed at Czechoslovakia in the Period 1948–1960*. According to the author, from the end of 1956 until the end of the 1970s, the mailing project sent *en masse* books, journals, leaflets, and clippings free of charge to Czechoslovak institutions, schools, libraries, and private persons. The composition of the postal mailings changed in 1958 to politically neutral printed materials—scientific, technical, and art. At the end of the 1950s and during the 1960s, 250 to 400 titles amounting to 30,000 to 50,000 pieces per year were delivered, part of them exile materials such as *Svědectví*, *České slovo*, edited by Jozef Pejskar (1912–1999), and *Zprávy SVU* (*News of the Czechoslovak Society of arts and Sciences/SVU*) in Washington, D.C.<sup>7</sup>

In 1952, the Bulgarian government set up a central bureau modelled on the Soviet “Glavlit” to deal with all literature and news publications, and a total of 137 individuals were tasked to spy on Bulgarians’ personal correspondence and check on the contents of all books and newspapers. The censors had a list of some 58 Western publications banned from Bulgaria. Only a group of select people approved by the state security services could receive or subscribe to medical and other magazines. People who received fashion and other magazines from the West were promptly called in by the police for questioning, and correspondence between Bulgarian citizens and Western businesses was investigated by the security services. Eventually people started complaining at post offices about confiscated parcels. “Glavlit” did not perform well, and in August 1956 party leader Todor Zhivkov ended it and absorbed it into the Propaganda Office, while censorship was turned over to individual post offices.<sup>8</sup>

Starting with his first reports on the responses to mailing operations, Minden noted down the titles and number of copies of returned books and magazines, often allegedly because of a faulty name or

<sup>7</sup> ABS, Fund of the College of National Security, Fund A/2/1, Inventory No. 1305, and Fund A/9, Inventory No. 301. Courtesy of Prokop Tomek.

<sup>8</sup> Dimitrova, *The Iron Fist. Inside the Archives of the Bulgarian Secret Police*, chapter 13, “Censorship,” 141–8. The censors’ bible was a 21-page pamphlet called “Tasks and Obligations of the Censors.” Ibid., 143.

address, a change of address, an incorrect address, or addressee unknown or left without forwarding address. In late 1956, this occurred in the case of seven copies of the French magazine *Revue du Salon* mailed to Czechoslovakia, and seven copies of selected articles by Pietro Nenni sent to Hungary.<sup>9</sup> In March 1957, a single copy of the *Virginia Quarterly* was returned from Poland, as well as an unnamed book from Bulgaria. Similar “returns” from Hungary continued in 1958 and late 1959, without concrete evidence about the honesty of the post office’s claims. At the end of 1957, one mailing to Czechoslovakia was returned marked “non-admissible” because of “infringement of currency regulations.”<sup>10</sup> The first written complaint came from the head physician of a Bulgarian hospital, who reported that the promised *Medical Dictionary* had not arrived. He bravely requested the date of mailing and registration number so that he may check at the post office.<sup>11</sup>

In a September 1958 report, two years after the start of the book program, Minden dealt with regime censorship on a country-by-country basis. He recognized the fact that in an atmosphere of fear and secrecy, the censors represented a formidable challenge. But he was not discouraged and remained realistic and pragmatic about censorship throughout the book program: “Books have a knack of finding their way to those eager to read and capable of understanding them, and we have no doubt that the majority of the books and pamphlets sent by us pass from the more or less ‘safe’ hands of their initial users or usurpers [the censors] into those of men and women who [...] can best use them. Whether this happens through orthodox and legitimate means, or through some ad hoc black market, we do not know—but we do not think it matters much [...] The censors have so much of a say in what book is going to whom and at what price.”<sup>12</sup>

Censors were particularly strict in the Baltic Soviet republics, where the existing integral national cultures were split into two parts:

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<sup>9</sup> Free Europe Press, Summary of Responses to Mailing Operations, Undated Report No. 3, 1956, 2. Courtesy of John P. C. Matthews.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., Undated Report No. 12, November–December 1957, 2.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., Report No. 24, October 1958, dated November 14, 1958, 1.

<sup>12</sup> George Minden, Response Patterns of the FEP Mailing Operations Behind the Iron Curtain as of September 1958, 2.

cultural life in exile and at home. To preserve their culture, the Baltic people had to resist forced russification and restrictions to cultural freedoms. Censorship ("Glavlit") never disappeared, but some books went through even there. In 1958, the book *Latvian Folk Songs* mailed got 30% responses, while 28 copies were returned in April 1959, allegedly because of incorrect addresses, deaths, or refusals to accept the book. One response came from two girls working in a post office in Riga who were in charge of opening the parcels from abroad, probably on the censor's behalf. They wrote to the return address and asked if, they too, might receive the book.<sup>13</sup>

In the same report, Minden described as "the most illuminating response" a Bulgarian press report from June 1958, containing a passage from a speech by the Minister of the Interior, Georgi Tsankov, at the Bulgarian Communist Party's Central Committee meeting of June 5. Tsankov had claimed: "In 1957 alone, thousands of Bulgarian citizens and patriots delivered to the Ministry over hundred different kinds of pamphlets, papers, magazines, and books they had received from capitalist countries." Minden wryly noted that Tsankov did not, however, say whether the citizens and patriots had read the materials they received before turning them over to the ministry.<sup>14</sup>

The fewest responses came from Romania, with only 60-odd letters in two years confirming the receipt of roughly 5% of the titles sent. These meager results were attributed to the very strict Romanian censorship, the small amount of foreign incoming mail that made books more obvious to the censors, and the general atmosphere of fear throughout the country. All the responses had been for entirely apolitical books on art and architecture, as well as dictionaries and catalogues, thus proving that such works were allowed to reach the addressees. According to a recent émigré, the other books landed in university libraries, where only advanced students were allowed to consult them. As for the more "subversive" material, some of it was sold on the black market by the censors themselves, just as Minden had correctly suspected.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. Georgi Tsankov (1912–?) was interior minister from 1954 to 1962, when he was fired and kicked upstairs as deputy prime minister in the wake of the revelations of the Lovech concentration camp in Bulgaria.



One such subversive book, *The World's Great Religions*, was mailed to a number of high-placed Romanian churchmen, with a gift letter pertaining to the book sent by separate mail. The vigilant censor stopped the book, including that of the Orthodox Patriarch, a trusted stooge of the regime, without realizing that the targets had already received letters announcing the gift. The Patriarch complained in a letter written in Romanian with a French translation about not having received the promised book, and asked the American sponsor to check the reason for his loss. He also asked for another copy and advised that it be sent by registered mail, an indirect crack at the censors. His letter was highly revealing of the atmosphere of mutual distrust that prevailed in Romania even in the highest places.<sup>15</sup>

Minden noted that the Hungarian press had carried only one reference to the “unsolicited envelopes of different shapes and colors coming from abroad that people used to receive in the summer of 1956,” and a number of attacks against Hungarian émigré periodicals and authors. Suspended after the crushing of the October 1956 Revolution, mailings to Hungary were resumed in the summer of 1957, but their choice and volume had to be more cautious than in the case of the other East European countries. In order not to provoke the censors, works in Hungarian were kept to a minimum—5% of the total as compared to 50% to 70% for most other countries. The sponsors were carefully selected from among non-political organizations and preference was given to institutions over individuals. Books on art and architecture, as well as dictionaries, went through, but so did works by Arnold Toynbee, Ortega y Gasset, and Isaiah Berlin, and subscriptions to magazines such as *The Swiss Review of World Affairs*, *Réalités*, and

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 6. On Romanian censorship, see *Cartea Cartilor Interzise* [*The Book of the Forbidden Books*], edited by the dissident writer Victor Frunza (1935–2007), who was expelled from Romania in 1980. The book includes the 1948 Index Librorum Prohibitorum and a few books forbidden in the 1970s. According to a Romanian scholar, even some books by Jean-Paul Sartre, the French pro-communist writer, were forbidden and confiscated by communist customs. The archival fund called “Comitetul pentru Presa și Tipărituri” [Committee for the Press and Printing] at the Central Historical Archives, Bucharest, unavailable as of 2009, is now available for research. Cristian Vasile to the author, August 1, 2009, and August 21, 2012.



*Twentieth Century*. On the other hand, 30 copies of a relatively mild political essay, Hans Kohn's "Is Western Liberalism in Decline?" were rejected by the censor and returned, as well as four copies of a book on twentieth-century America. One copy of the otherwise very successful *Three Hundred Years of American Painting* met with the same fate.<sup>16</sup>

A Lithuanian living in Poland who heard about books being sent from the West wrote that he and his friends were after Lithuanian books "like fish after water." He suggested sending the books one or two at a time since a larger shipment would not get past the censors, even if only one book was objectionable.<sup>17</sup> An astonishingly candid letter received from a Latvian teacher in Aloja who was determined to get the works sent to him revealed the strain the book program may have placed on the internal censorship of the USSR. He wrote:

I am now very busy with the books you sent me. It remains to be seen what the results will be because, officially, we do not have any censorship. My complaint was answered by the Minister of Communications who explained that in the result of checking, it has been established that the mentioned parcels had not been received in Riga. However, this did not satisfy me and I wrote to Moscow. An answer from there told me that they [the parcels] had been sent to Riga. On the basis of this, I asked the Riga authorities for the second time to tell me why I had been wrongly informed. To this letter I have not yet received an answer. Also an inquiry came from America [the mailer] concerning the

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 9. On the control of postal letters and mailings, see Gábor Tabajdi and Krisztián Ungváry, *Elhallgatott múlt. A pártállam és a belügy. A politikai rendőrség működése Magyarországon* [Unrevealed past. The party state and the Interior Ministry. The functioning of the political police in Hungary] (Budapest: Corvina and 1956 Intézet, 2008), especially 164–7 on the operative "K" control of postal mailings and letters. In 1963, 19 million pieces of mail came in and went out of Hungary. 1.4% of the mail from and to capitalist countries was controlled and 75,000 items confiscated, 33,000 as "incoming hostile propaganda" and 42,000 as outgoing requests for assistance. In 1964, 11,000 Hungarian and foreign language press publications were seized, 60% of which were of a religious nature.

<sup>17</sup> Free Europe Press, Summary of Responses to Mailing Operation, No. 13, [undated], 4, *ibid.*

whereabouts of the parcels because there was an inquiry from Moscow sent to Aloja asking to reply whether they had been received there. Let them quarrel and then we will see what happens. Maybe by some chance something will be received.<sup>18</sup>

In a letter written in English, a Hungarian lawyer reported that the book he had requested, *Primer for Star Gazers* by Henry Neely, had arrived but without the accompanying letter. He wrote: "Possibly Hungarian censorship took it from the parcel. The book gives me great pleasure, and I am glad to read something other than communist propaganda."<sup>19</sup> An art historian wrote that the three books he requested had not arrived, and thus another three were sent to him. On the positive side, a young man interviewed in the West reported that the Hungarian translation of Milovan Djilas's *The New Class* (*Az új osztály*) had been sent to his father, a doctor, in an envelope without return address. This was the first confirmation of the receipt in Hungary of Free Europe Press's translation of Djilas's book.<sup>20</sup>

About 200 individual responses were received from Czechoslovakia in the first three years of the book program, confirming only 10% of the some 350 titles sent. Until July 1957, when it was ascertained that Czechs showed a great aversion to politically tinged books, the only books mailed had been translations of political material, to which no responses could be expected. Unlike in the other target countries, the mailing program received wide publicity in the Czech and Slovak communist press. Starting in 1956 and during the following years, the country was the one in which the official reaction to the mailing project had been the easiest to follow, through a steady flow of official exposes of the operation, warnings, protests, denunciations, and threats, including an appeal to the law-abiding population to report "subversive letters" to the authorities. These pronouncements will be examined in the next chapter dealing with regime criticisms of and attacks against the book program.

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<sup>18</sup> Free Europe Press, Summary of Responses to Mailing Operations, Report No. 31, May 1 to May 31, 1959 [undated], 22, *ibid*.

<sup>19</sup> Free Europe Press, Summary of Responses to Mailing Operations. Report No. 30, April 1 to April 1959, 2 and 13, *ibid*.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, Report No. 36, October 1 to October 31, 1959, 1.

Czechoslovak requests came from institutions which, thanks to Minden's "covert" help, became engaged in book exchanges with their opposite members in the Free World. Not surprisingly, Czechoslovakia was first in its large number of books (over 100) returned as unacceptable. For Minden, this did not necessarily mean that Czechoslovak censors were worse than the others, but that they were more scrupulous about returning books they judged undesirable. Among the rejections was a book by Hans Kohn, *Le vertige de minuit* (Midnight vertigo), a thriller written by Czech émigré Egon Hostovský, and Theodor Plivier's *Berlin*, a book critical of both Germans and Russians. As in the case of all the other target countries, with the noteworthy exception of the three Baltic republics, material in foreign languages was discriminated against less than material in the language of the country. 98% of the responses from Czechoslovakia came to material in foreign languages, and were always in the language of the material sent.<sup>21</sup>

Poland, the biggest and most populous of the eight target countries, received from the start the largest number of books and other materials sent. According to Minden: "As was to be expected, the Polish mailing project proved to be by far the most rewarding of all of our projects [...] Two-thirds of our messages get through and responses come by the thousands."<sup>22</sup> This was so in spite of occasional party warnings about "foreign literature" reaching the country from abroad (the first on record occurred in spring 1959). Some 80% of the approximately 5,000 responses received up to 1959 were Polish. The receipt of slightly over one half (53%) of the 681 titles, representing 160,000 books and periodicals, sent to Poland had been confirmed by responses, leaving 319 titles unaccounted for and probably stopped by the censors. This was due to the fact that Poland had more internal freedom than any other East European country following the Polish October of 1956 and the return of Władisław Gomułka to power.

Minden, however, did not agree with his Polish collaborator Paul Mayewski that Polish censorship had become more liberal and more rational. Private sources of information reported that censors had started invoking Article 59 more frequently than before, and were

<sup>21</sup> Same as footnote 6, 10–13.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 16–20. In retrospect, many of Minden's views proved to be correct long before the revelations contained in *The Black Book of Polish Censorship*.

confiscating books even from parcels later forwarded to the addresses. Minden did not believe in the Polish censors' almost total acceptance of technical books, classical and modern fiction, anthologies, literary criticism and arts, statistical material in English, books on economics and sociology, magazines with no political content, and exile writings by politically non-controversial authors. For him, the censors did not follow any intelligent criteria of exclusion, because rejections included entirely innocuous books while some "dangerous" ones had passed. Of the 319 titles presumably turned down, 192 were indeed political material, a large amount of it in Polish, but 127 were completely non-political, usually in foreign languages. They included Western magazines such as *Marie Claire*, *Popular Science*, *Interbau Berlin*, a French-Polish dictionary, *Le petit Larousse illustré* (passed even by the Hungarian and Bulgarian censors), books on American automobiles, the American West, the French theatre, the history of French science, and many other inoffensive items. Only one of the 200 copies of the Larousse dictionary and one of the 500 French-Polish dictionaries mailed reached their target, which could also be attributed to the censors' propensity for tampering with material sent to young people.

Minden noted that "the censors' lack of discernment might in a few cases work to our advantage in allowing some politically tainted material into Poland, provided it is not in Polish and in great numbers." At the same time, he conceded that "the Polish censors' discrimination and occasional application of a rule of thumb compares favorably with what happens in the other East European countries." The report also stated that of the 44 mentions or reviews of books sent through the project, 13 had not elicited any response. These books could all be considered political material and yet had reached the reviewers without generating a response. This could show either one of two things: the censors better treated the press, or the targets were loath to acknowledge the receipt of politically and ideologically tainted material.

A summary of the results achieved from September 1958 to August 1959 reported an increased reaction in both responses and requests despite a decrease in the number of titles sent. Minden pointed out that the monthly figures in his reports represented only a fraction of what was mailed behind the Iron Curtain, because with the exception of Poles and Hungarians, only a very small minority of addressees in the other target countries dared to write abroad.

Hungarian recipients confirmed all but 101 of the total 281 titles sent in 1958, meaning that 180 titles passed the censors, eliciting responses ranging from 6% to 30% individual responses. Out of the 536 titles sent to Poland, only 28 got no response. As Minden noted: "There is only one more barrier to knock down in the case of Poland: that forbidding our access to youth and mass organizations."<sup>23</sup>

In the case of Romania, where Stalinism still lingered on, all requests came from institutions or people connected with them, showing the tight control exercised by the Romanian censors. Although the situation was similar in Bulgaria, responses from that country were four times as numerous as the Romanian ones following the resumption of diplomatic relations with the U.S. There were even a few courageous or "tolerated" requests for subscriptions to "imperialistic" magazines such as *Time* and *Life*. Requests from Czechoslovakia continued to come mainly from institutions in the frame of book exchanges with their opposite members in the West.<sup>24</sup>

There are few detailed sources on censorship for the years 1960–1962, except a report on Polish person-to-person distribution for the period January 1, 1958 to December 31, 1961. According to the report, "The number of frontier confiscations is so negligible that one may assume a 100 p.c. successful transportation through the Iron Curtain." The reaction of the communist apparatus of control was described as "dubious." The liberal elements "do not perceive" the large proportion of smuggled literature, while some of the "stalinists" would like to curb it down through regulations announced in July 1960 regarding the import of "hostile" foreign literature to Poland—not enforced—and a campaign to discredit some of the Polish book distributors. The report concluded that these attempts "had no effect on the operation whatsoever."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Memorandum to The Director, FEOP, November 24, 1959, 1–4.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>25</sup> Unsigned and undated report on Polish person-to-person distribution, probably by George Minden, from January 1964, 2. Minden was aware that the censors were always present at U.S. book exhibits in Warsaw and Poznan. As a result, experienced publishers were also well aware of the type of books that would be removed from the shelves, and practiced self-censorship. U.S. Warsaw Embassy Airgram to Department of State, July 5, 1962, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

Throughout the 1960s, Minden continued to pay close attention to regime censorship in his detailed monthly highlights reports covering all eight target countries, available from March 1963. He regularly took notice of persons who complained of not receiving the books sent to them. A Czech professor asked that a copy of *Dr. Zhivago* be re-mailed with a plain jacket and with no other books, so that at least it would not be stopped. A Romanian professor who did not receive a book on twentieth-century architecture and a catalogue that had been announced asked for details on the shipment and requested the sponsor to try again. Copies of Gaëtan Picon's *Panorama des idées contemporaines* in Polish mailed to Lithuania were not received, while other books sent by the same sponsor were acknowledged by the addressees.<sup>26</sup> A Czech historian asked the sponsor to write to the French cultural attaché in Prague and to cite Poland as a more reasonable example of censorship. He openly stated that the only way to keep the situation fluid was to keep pressure on the censors. Correspondents in both Romania and Bulgaria also began to suggest that sponsors check on books that did not arrive.<sup>27</sup>

Early in 1964, Minden reported vocal complaints about censorship in Poland, where 34 intellectuals wrote to Premier Józef Cyrankiewicz protesting government censorship and control of publications by the manipulation of paper supplies. The protest was censored, but Radio Free Europe broadcast the full text. In Czechoslovakia, addressees wrote back to publishers or advised them to apply to the postal authorities for financial refunds on registered parcels that went undelivered. A Czech correspondent complained in an identical letter sent to two publishers about the unreliable book delivery in his country, "as this is not the first but the almost usual case of books that never reached my address for queer and mysterious reasons." An Estonian correspondent bravely requested a linguistics volume on the Estonian language, even though, as he put it, "It is known that it will not arrive."<sup>28</sup> Concern in all target countries over censorship continued

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<sup>26</sup> July [1963] Highlights, dated August 7, 1963, 2, and August [1963] Highlights, dated September 6, 1963, 2. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Microfiche Provisional Box 3.

<sup>27</sup> September [1963] Highlights, dated October 4, 1963, 2, *ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Memorandum from PSPD/GM to the President, FEC, January [1964] Highlights, dated February 7, 1964, 1–2.

to be evident and was sometimes expressed with humorous irony. A Hungarian prelate writing in Latin explained that he could thank sponsors for only two books out of three. The third book, he said, did not arrive because the censors saw two and decided that a third “was too much [...] For there is a law in Hungary saying that no Catholic priest can receive three books from abroad, lest he resells them. Such is liberty in Hungary.”<sup>29</sup>

Several correspondents confirmed that many books that went undelivered had been stolen and found their destination through the black market. A Polish professor visiting Chicago explained that many postal clerks could not resist the temptation to steal and resell books, especially since they earned an average of 1,200 zlotys per month, and one single copy of *Life* magazine would yield 150 zlotys on the black market. One Hungarian returned an acknowledgement form blank with the simple notation: “Book removed from the parcel by unknown hands.” Czech addressees, however, still blamed the censors for lost mail since “some of their fighters for a better future are lacking in basic intelligence, and mean methods are closer to their hearts than a reasonable approach.”<sup>30</sup>

On the other hand, inquiries to Polish addressees initiated by PSPD sponsors indicated that many books not acknowledged had in fact been received. The Kosciuszko Foundation sent the Jagiellonian University of Kraków a list of books mailed to them in 1963, asking whether its silence meant that the books had not arrived or that the university was not interested. The university promptly wrote back with profuse apologies, confirming the receipt of all the books named and expressing the desire to remain on the foundation’s mailing list.

Inquiries put to the French postal authorities by Libella in Paris over the whereabouts of registered packages led to the following: the French authorities questioned the Polish postal authorities, which in

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., February [1964] Highlights, dated March 6, 1964, 1. The same report mentioned that several French sponsors received compensation for registered mail sent to Poland but not delivered, and that the Romanian export-import firm Metalimport wrote to two sponsors that they had received letters but no books, and were still waiting for the *Dictionary of Synonyms and Antonyms* and the *1963 Statistical Abstract of the United States*.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., March [1964] Highlights, dated April 8, 1964, 2.



turn questioned the addressee, and the addressee wrote back to the sponsor to get information about the registered numbers of packages they had received, so he or she could answer the Polish authorities. On the positive side, copies of an expensive book, *L'art à travers le monde* (Art throughout the world) by Henri Perruchot, autographed by the author, elicited many confirmations and indicated that the personal touch helped get the book past the censors and sticky fingers in the post office.<sup>31</sup>

RUCH, the official Polish import agency for foreign publications, wrote directly to the editors of the *Central European Federalist* in New York to ask their help in finding out why they had received no copies of the paper in 1963 although they had subscribed through the Franklin Square Agency. A student requesting books in Polish from the Chicago Polish Student Association expressed great interest in Kultura publications—the strongly anti-communist publisher in Paris—but observed that “objective reasons would prevent the receipt of these books.”<sup>32</sup>

Censorship seemed to vary unpredictably from locality to locality, and the attitudes of the respondents—their fear or lack of fear of association with the West—also seemed to vary greatly, depending on their position and circumstances. A letter from the School of Social Sciences of the Polish communist party's Central Committee, asking for Richard Staar's *Poland 1944–62*, which had been mailed to them but which they never received, seemed to indicate that Polish censorship reached into every level. Yet the same School of Social Studies acknowledged a number of books on Soviet policies. The Literary Institute in Warsaw did not hesitate to write to Kultura, stating that they had not received several books and requesting additional titles. A Polish writer, visiting Vienna, wrote to Kultura's Institut Littéraire offering to reciprocate for books he had received, but asking for “a neutral address” not previously used “to which he could safely send” his exchange books.<sup>33</sup> A professor in Poznań thanked for a French book on rural economy, and wrote: “After reading it again, I shall present this valuable work to our University Library and make it avail-

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>33</sup> May [1964] Highlights, dated June 10, 1964, 2–3.



able to others who often crave direct information from the other side of the so-called 'Iron Curtain' which has not been sifted by the official sieves."<sup>34</sup>

A Romanian editor returned *Best American Short Stories of 1963*, disclaiming any knowledge of it or of English, and asserting: "I have absolutely no ties to the U.S. of America." Minden noted that his name no longer appeared on the masthead of the literary magazine with which he was associated, indicating that he had been removed from his position and lived in fear. A Czech correspondent wrote he had given his IAC book offer to his niece who was studying English in senior high school, and added: "For obvious reasons, she used my address because she is before graduation." This would indicate that contact with the West might have prejudiced her academic standing. A very candid Hungarian university student wrote: "When I receive a Western magazine it is very comforting for me because I may see that men live without restriction and in happiness across the Iron Curtain."<sup>35</sup>

Censorship remained active in Czechoslovakia, stopping a parcel containing back issues of *Look* magazine. Fear also prevailed, as indicated by a request to the Czech exile publication *Proměny* in New York to send copies to an address in Vienna, with the understanding that the magazine would be sent on from there to someone in Czechoslovakia. On the other hand, *Proměny* also received an offer of exchanges from a Slovak library, and *Svědectví*, a Czech exile publication in Paris, received a subscription request from Prague.<sup>36</sup> The censors' hand was evident in a number of letters from Poland. The Institute of Literature in Warsaw complained that it had not received the September 1963 to March 1964 issues of *Kultura*. Several letters from the French post office reported that some of the books mailed to Poland by registered mail had been lost and a refund would be mailed. It also reported that a package containing two strongly anti-communist books had been confiscated by the Polish authorities.<sup>37</sup>

In July 1964, the Accademia Cristiana Cecoslovacca in Rome received three letters, one of them addressed to the Czechoslovak

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<sup>34</sup> July [1964] Highlights, dated August 10, 1964, 4.

<sup>35</sup> May [1964] Highlights, dated June 10, 1964, 2-3.

<sup>36</sup> June [1964] Highlights, dated July 18, 1964, 4.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 5.

censor. The writer wrote: "It is fruitless to tell me that we have freedom when you make out of our country a sort of concentration camp where nothing can pierce the border which does not fit into the mold of atheism and materialism." The letter to the censor was meant to explain why the correspondent had to write to Rome to complain about conditions in Czechoslovakia. Fortunately the letter was not opened. PSPD's Munich representative reported contacting through a priest the Prague Archbishop Jozef Beran. Although his mail was censored, the Archbishop received the June issues of the exile periodicals *České slovo* and *Svědectví*.<sup>38</sup>

A letter from a Hungarian student of architecture at the University of Cluj in Romania asked for "books in English (and perhaps French and Italian) concerning architecture and history of art" and requested that the books be sent to the address of his aunt in Hungary who would hold them for him. He wrote: "The reason I ask that you send the books to my aunt's address is that postal relations are very bad in Romania."<sup>39</sup>

The Baltic countries suffered particularly from very strict KGB censorship and control over cultural life. A well-known Lithuanian poet and novelist wrote to Paris that he had received the letters informing him of the sending of two works by André Maurois and of Czesław Miłosz's *Rodzinną Europą*, but that the books had failed to arrive. His dispirited reaction: "In view of this, the question arises whether it is worthwhile sending books which are not reaching me for reasons not known to me." The addressee lived next door to a leading literary critic who in April 1964 acknowledged receiving the Maurois book. Books were mailed to both men at the same time.<sup>40</sup>

Presumably to evade the censors, letters from the Baltic countries were often written on purpose in an obscure way. Correspondents writing to a sponsor in Stockholm frequently referred to him as "grandfather." A nurse in Estonia wrote: "I received from Grandfather an interesting *Mana*, for which I gave him my warmest thanks [...] There are also others waiting their turn to read the book." *Mana* was an Estonian cultural and political magazine published in Sweden, and

<sup>38</sup> July [1964] Highlights, dated August 10, 1964, 3 and 7, *ibid*.

<sup>39</sup> September [1964] Highlights, dated October 15, 1964, 5, *ibid*.

<sup>40</sup> May [1964] Highlights, dated June 10, 1964, 8, *ibid*.

also the Estonian word for witchcraft—a confusing message for the censor to decipher.<sup>41</sup>

In early 1965, an artist and a professor of French, who received the letters but not the books sent to them, reported more cases of books that never arrived. One month later, five of the ten letters received from Lithuania reported they had not received the books mailed to them. One addressee wrote: “I have not received Sartre’s *Qu’est-ce que la littérature?* (What is literature?). It has been stolen or confiscated.”<sup>42</sup> Similar laments continued in 1966. A Lithuanian correspondent replying to an offer of books from Paris wrote: “I really do not know which of them have free entry to us, so to speak.”<sup>43</sup> A literary critic in Vilnius thanked for five books sent to him, but a sixth, Francis Jeanson’s *Sartre par lui-même* (Sartre by himself), was stopped by the censors. The same fate befell a French Larousse dictionary and an anthology of Polish poetry mailed to Lithuania, showing that even dictionaries and literary works were not welcome by the censors.<sup>44</sup> Augustinas Savickas, a well-known artist of more or less good political standing (he was a leader among the Association of Lithuanian Writers) complained that he had not received Marc Chagall’s autobiography *My Life* and lamented that “Unfortunately, getting books from abroad is an enormous problem here at this time.” An assistant professor at the Institute of Arts in Vilnius, who was also a painter, wrote more bluntly: “I inform you that I live in the USSR and I have not received your book [Chagall’s *My Life*] which you are sending me. I think I will never receive it.”<sup>45</sup>

<sup>41</sup> September [1964] Highlights, dated October 15, 1964, 6. On censorship in Estonia, See Kaljo-Olev Veskimägi, *Nõukogude unelaadne elu. Tsensuur Eesti NSV-s ja tema peremehed* [The insomniac Soviet life. Censorship in the Estonian SSR and its masters], (Tallinn: Tallinna Raamatutrükikoda [Tallinn Printing House], 1996). In one case, a censor missed a typing error in a newspaper and had to face a penalty for it. Hiljar Tammela (Tallinn) to the author, September 8, 2011.

<sup>42</sup> February [1965] Highlights, dated March 5, 1965, 8, and March [1965] Highlights, dated April 5, 1965, 10, *ibid*.

<sup>43</sup> February [1966] Highlights, dated March 9, 1966, 12, *ibid*.

<sup>44</sup> May [1966] Highlights, dated June 1, 1966, 12, *ibid*.

<sup>45</sup> June [1966] Highlights, dated July 19, 1966, 12, *ibid*. On Lithuania, see Venclova, “Translations of World Literature and Political Censorship in Lithuania.”

Polish censorship continued to be haphazard and uneven, with some books being stopped and others getting through, for no discernible reason. Kennedy's *Profiles in Courage* was mailed in the French translation. Some of the addressees received it, others did not, including *Polityka*, Gomulka's mouthpiece. The same applied to publications by *Kultura*. The Association of Polish Journalists wrote to *Kultura* saying that of late they had not received its publications, and asked for the dates of mailings to check at the post office. The Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences wrote that they had received one issue of *Kultura* and a book published by *Kultura*, but that several other items had failed to arrive. A surprising stratagem to evade censorship at the border was reported by a Paris sponsor. The cultural attaché of the Polish embassy in Paris provided a Pole who was returning from Paris to Poland with a signed statement certifying that the bearer was working on a film dealing with Polish immigrants in France and was taking with him to Poland books related to this work. None of the books listed in the statement had anything to do with the alleged subject, but they were all published by *Kultura*, most of them of a highly controversial nature.<sup>46</sup> The Catholic Institute of Religious Culture in Lublin wrote that they had not received *Der ungekündigte Bund. Neue Begegnung von Juden und christlichen Gemeinde* (*The Unending Union. New Encounter Between Jews and Christian Communities*) by Dietrich Goldschmidt and Hans-Joachim Klaus mailed to them from Germany, while the Bishop of the Evangelical Church in Warsaw acknowledged receipt of the same book.<sup>47</sup>

A Prague correspondent who received John Kenneth Galbraith's *The Affluent Society* wrote: "Let us hope the other two books come in good order. I have the experience that the books sent to me by individuals did not get lost, even if they came after some months. There might be a difference with books sent by corporations; in this case some kind of propaganda might be seen in books with social or political topics." The Free Europe Committee's *Czechoslovak News Bulletin* was received by Artia, the Czech Foreign Trade Corporation for the Import and Export of Cultural Commodities. They wrote in February 1965 that

<sup>46</sup> December [1964] Highlights, dated January 11, 1965, 1, *ibid*.

<sup>47</sup> February [1965] Highlights, dated March 5, 1965, 1, *ibid*.

they had not received a number of issues and asked for them, indicating their interest in the bulletin, and noting also that censorship interfered with the mail of official bodies.<sup>48</sup>

In Bulgaria, the authorities seemed to have no objection to physicians, engineers, or technicians receiving books in their fields. This was evidenced by the fact that when these professionals moved to a new address, the post office forwarded their letters. When other individuals moved, books sent to them from the West were returned, marked "address unknown."<sup>49</sup> A Paris sponsor, Editions du Seuil, received an acknowledgement for books from the Bulgarian Bishop Nicolas, though it had sent no books whatsoever to him. This seemed to confirm what Minden had been suspecting for some time—that the Bulgarian authorities channeled some of the books sent from the West to people other than the original addressees.<sup>50</sup> It came as a surprise when the Cyril and Method National Library in Sofia complained in April 1965 to Galerie Lambert in Paris that it had not received three books on French and Polish literature, previously sent by the Galerie. Long delays in the arrival of mail also revealed the rigid censorship in force. The Director of the Institute for Urbanism and Architecture wrote that the subscription offer to a German architectural magazine sent to him on January 20, 1965, reached him toward the end of March. Similarly, a letter mailed from Sofia on March 7, 1965, arrived in Stuttgart on April 14.<sup>51</sup>

Polish correspondents fought their own war against censorship, as shown by a letter sent to the Sikorski Historical Institute in London (a sponsor) by the Historical Institute in Łódź. They wrote: "I am obliged to state with regret that not one of the books mentioned reached us. From our correspondence with other foreign institutions, I know that the same thing happens to other books mailed to us from the West [...] We tried to intervene in the past, but not one of the approached institutions cared to reply. Without any proof [that the books have been mailed], we were in a hopeless situation [...] Probably official sources wish to safeguard us against the bad influence of the capitalist West

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>50</sup> March [1965] Highlights, dated April 5, 1965, 9, *ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> May [1965] Highlights, dated June 8, 1965, 8, *ibid.*

and are watchful. There are no logical rules—we never know what will reach us or what will be stolen or confiscated. Perhaps in some cases books are really stolen on the long journey from London to Łódź.”<sup>52</sup> The Historical Institute in Poznań wrote that it had not received books sent by the London Sikorski Historical Institute. The Catholic University in Lublin informed the Institute that it had not received ten books sent to them. It asked that in the future, books be sent to the National Library in Warsaw, with an inside wrapping addressed to the Catholic University, indicating that they might have worked out an arrangement with the National Library to forward books to them. Such bleak letters were offset by others. A sponsor wrote to the library of the Pedagogical College in Kraków explaining that they had received no acknowledgements of receipt for books sent and assumed that the library was not interested in receiving any other books. The College replied and confirmed the receipt of nearly 100 books received over a period of time and apologized for not having done so previously. Undoubtedly, this kind of oversight or caution rather than censorship was often responsible for books going unacknowledged.<sup>53</sup>

*Polska w Europie* (Poland in Europe), a strongly anti-communist publication of the Association of Polish Federalists in Paris, wrote to addressees in Poland asking if they wished to continue receiving the magazine. A reply came from the headquarters of Pax in Warsaw (the Catholic organization which cooperated with the regime), stating that they did not receive the magazine, but would like to do so, and asked that it be sent to another address. The Library of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński wrote that they had not received *Die Idee des Fortschritts* (The idea of progress) and asked that in the future books be sent by registered mail. Several Polish bishops already in Rome for the autumn 1965 meeting of the Ecumenical Council stated that they were able to take to Poland all the books given to them without interference from the censors.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> March [1965] Highlights, dated April 5, 1965, 2–3, *ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 2–3.

<sup>54</sup> April [1965] Highlights, dated May 5, 1965, 3 and 11, *ibid.* The French post office agreed to pay compensation for the four registered book parcels sent to Poland that did not arrive.

There were signs of a relaxation of censorship in Czechoslovakia in the spring of 1965, when sponsors received requests in answer to an offer of books as soon as two weeks after the offer was mailed. People also seemed less afraid to ask for books. Kazimierz Romanowicz, the owner of the Galerie Lambert, learned from a Czech writer visiting Paris that at a recent meeting of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers, a member of the executive body declared that he hoped the membership appreciated the work and achievements of the Union, whereupon one of the members replied: "I don't know what work you are talking about. Personally I think the results were insignificant. For example, I would like to know whether the executive body knows there are opportunities for receiving books from France. I assume you don't know it because the members are not informed of this. Such an opportunity exists, and I am willing to offer the address." There were shouts from the hall, "Give the address!" The speaker then mentioned the Galerie Lambert. A letter written to Herold Verlag, a Catholic publishing house in Vienna and a sponsor, also spoke of a more relaxed atmosphere in Czechoslovakia. The writer said: "Recently three short translations were published in the magazine *Tvár* (Face) [...] The magazine is much sought after now as it deals with the latest developments and discovers for us formerly forbidden authors [...] A sort of rehabilitation is now in progress. Names like Richard Wener, Ladislav Klíma, Jakub Deml, [Jan] Cep, [Jan] Zahradníček, [Jaroslav] Durych and J[ozef] Florian are seen again and are gaining importance. Perhaps the works of these writers will be published some day."<sup>55</sup>

Difficulties with censorship persisted in Poland at the end of 1965. Jan Dobraczyński, the most important writer of the PAX group, wrote that he had not received the books sent to him, even those that were non-political. A professor in Poznań wrote: "Until now I have not received the books I requested. It is strange because two weeks ago I received books from the Librairie Polonaise. May I ask you to mail books not to my private address but to the University, as I think this will increase their chances of arrival." Censorship, however, was only sporadic and many political books got through to libraries and other institutions, while few such books were sent to individuals directly.

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<sup>55</sup> May [1965] Highlights, dated June 8, 1965, 5, *ibid*.



Through one of the book exchange programs, 41 books were sent to the Library of Toruń University, 12 to the National Library, and 27 books each to the Central Military Library, the Library of the Military and Political Academy, and the Library of Warsaw University. The majority of these books were of a political nature. Mihajlov's *Moskauer Sommer 1964* (Moscow Summer 1964), mailed from Switzerland, was acknowledged by the Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences, the University Library of Łódź, the Parliament Library, and the National Library.<sup>56</sup>

Three letters written to *Kultura* by a Polish professor visiting Vienna shed some light on the censorship situation in Poland. The professor had originally asked for three sets of Witos's *Memoirs* but then reduced his request to one set. "Instytut Literacki, as the publisher of *Kultura*," he wrote, "is not looked upon favorably and I am afraid that should three sets be found I might be accused of distributing anti-government materials." In his second letter, he said: "There will be no intervention in your case [intervention of the Polish government with the French government against *Kultura*]. The Polish foreign office was reasonable enough to kill this idea." In his third letter, he thanked *Kultura* for the books sent to him and added: "Now it remains only to carry them safely across the frontier. I do not expect much trouble with the Polish customs. It may be worse with the Czechs; they are even more stupid and all books or magazines coming from capitalist countries are products of an enemy."<sup>57</sup> Minden's representative in Paris reported that János Pilinszky, a well-known Catholic poet, was stopped at the Hungarian border; the religious books given to him were confiscated, while the political books were not. This might have been an isolated instance, or it might have been indicative of greater severity toward religious books.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> November [1965] Highlights, dated December 21, 1965, *ibid.* The political titles were Louis Fischer's *Life of Lenin*, Klaus Mehnert's *Peking and Moscow*, Andrzej Korbonski's *Politics of Socialist Agriculture in Poland*, and Mihaljlo Mihajlov's *Moscow Summer 1964*. The French post office sent two letters to the Institut Littéraire in Paris stating that they had checked on a number of books sent by registered mail to Poland and that these had not been delivered.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.



In December 1965, the General Sikorski Historical Institute received eight letters from the British post office stating that registered books sent to Poland had been “seized by the Polish customs.” A ninth letter stated that a registered package, about which an inquiry had been made in March 1965, had arrived on August 30, 1965, “although in their reply the Polish authorities have given no reason for the delay in delivery.”<sup>59</sup> Letters received from Poland showed that censors remained active. The State University in Łódź acknowledged two books, but a third mailed in the same package, Witold Gombrowicz’s *Kosmos*, had been taken out. The French post office advised a Paris sponsor that three books mailed to the Education College in Katowice had been confiscated as “subversive.” These were a novel, a manual of French literature, and *Panorama des idées contemporaines* edited by Gaëtan Picon. Many other letters complained that books had not arrived, or that they arrived after months of delay. Often the censorship seemed capricious. The library of Toruń University received 38 copies of the magazine *Encounter*, but said they had not received the cultural magazine *Tematy*, copies of which were actually distributed by the Polish distribution agency RUCH. *Marxism and Personality*, the latest book by the well-known Polish philosopher Adam Schaff, was sharply criticized in Poland. Books were regularly sent to him, most of them political. In 1965, Schaff received such books as *Démocratie et totalitarisme* (*Democracy and Totalitarianism*) by Raymond Aron, *L’idéologie soviétique contemporaine* (*Contemporary Soviet Ideology*) by Wolfgang Leonhard, and *Trotsky* by Isaac Deutscher.<sup>60</sup>

A Czech visitor in Paris reported that from December 1965 until February 1966, censorship had been more rigid in Czechoslovakia. Czechs visiting Vienna were eager to obtain copies of *Videňské svobodné noviny* (Vienna free newspaper), a Czech daily published in Vienna. They often smuggled it across the border by using it as wrapping paper. Several Bulgarians reported that books had not arrived. A correspondent at the Ethnographic Museum in Sofia wrote that the registered copy of Pierre Salomon’s *Précis d’histoire de la littérature française* (Concise history of French literature) had not arrived and asked

<sup>59</sup> December [1965] Highlights, dated January 13, 1966, 4, *ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> February [1966] Highlights, dated March 9, 1966, 4, *ibid.*

if another copy could be sent. A Bulgarian translator who had received many books requested a book on French literature of the twentieth century. He asked that the book be sent by registered mail not to him but to the head of the Translation Center in Sofia, probably in the hope of avoiding censorship.<sup>61</sup>

A professor of literature at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków commented ironically on the censorship, writing: "Something strange and unbelievable happened. A package of books you have kindly mailed to me arrived. There are however some interesting aspects. The Paris post office stamp is October 3, [1965], that of Kraków February 6 [1966]. Therefore this package traveled for more than four months. During that time an astronaut could reach Mars and return to earth. No doubt at the time of Henri Valois [seventeenth-century king of Poland and France], there were better postal connections between Paris and Kraków. One such event throws light like a flash of lightning in the night, and everything becomes clear. What conditions for intellectuals to work under."<sup>62</sup>

Letters were often received asking about the delay in receiving books. From information received from Polish visitors to the West and by analyzing responses to some of the mailing projects, Minden's PSPD concluded that Polish censorship was much stricter in early 1966 than in 1965 or 1964. Minden decided to check the reason for the lack of response to some mailings by having his sponsors write to addressees asking if the book mailed had been received. In some cases, letters apologizing for not having acknowledged the book were received. If the book was not received and had been sent by registered mail, compensation was claimed from the Polish post office.

Signs of more severe censorship were also found in Hungary. PSPD asked a German sponsor to start a post office check on registered books that had not been received by the addressees. As a letter from the Hannover post office explained: "According to a recent communication of the Hungarian postal authorities, shipments which incite against the social order, the political or economic conditions in Hungary, or against public order and good morals, are excluded

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 11 and 14.

<sup>62</sup> March [1966] Highlights, dated April 11, 1966, 2, *ibid.*

from postal handling and delivery in Hungary.”<sup>63</sup> The books stopped included, among others, Kennedy’s *Wege nach Frieden* (Freedom’s road) and *Auf dem Wege nach Europa* (On the road to Europe) by André François-Poncet. Valerij Tarsis’s controversial *Die blaue Fliege* (The blue flea) was received by some of the addressees, such as the Hungarian P.E.N. Club and the literary periodical *Valóság*, and not by others, among them the periodical *Nagyvilág*. The censors also stopped copies mailed to the libraries of the Universities of Szeged and Pécs, and to the county library of Kecskemét. Surprisingly, *Nagyvilág* and the three libraries all wrote that they had received another controversial book, *Junge Lyrik aus dem anderen Russland* (Young lyrics from the other Russia), edited by Elimar Schubbe.<sup>64</sup>

A parcel of magazines sent with registered mail to Czechoslovakia arrived, minus two issues of the *Reader’s Digest*, which the censors found “inadmissible.” Several individuals who were given subscriptions to *National Geographic* reported that the January and March 1966 issues had not arrived. The former contained an article on American presidents, and the latter a long article on life in Moscow. A release sent out by the Press and Radio Service of the Internationalen Bundes Freier Gewerkschaften in Vienna indicated that carrying political books across the border into Czechoslovakia was still dangerous. It reported that a 43-year old Czech worker was sentenced to eight months in prison by the District Court in Ostrava in November 1965 because “he smuggled books into the country and loaned them to his friends.” The books were confiscated.<sup>65</sup>

The writer of a letter from Prague said that he had received *The World in 1984*, but stated: “I am not sure but I am afraid that our authorities have confiscated one book from this parcel. In my last letter I asked you for the novel *1984* by George Orwell. Probably this book is prohibited here. If it is true, I am very ashamed for this action of our authorities. There are many books which I am interested in but I worry that they would be confiscated too. I think it will be better if I do not ask for this sort of book. I am studying cartography at Prague Technical University. You know that contacts between Eastern and

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 9 and 14.

Western countries are unfortunately very bad. This is why I am obliged to you for your kindness. In this time this is the only way to establish new contacts.”<sup>66</sup>

New evidence of continuing censorship emerged from Bulgaria. The French post office reported that *Le lien théâtral dans la société moderne* (The theatrical bond in modern society), sent by registered mail to an addressee in Sofia, had been confiscated by the Bulgarian censors. An artist, to whom a sponsor sent a book in French on the treasures of the National Gallery in Washington, wrote that the book had not arrived “for unknown reasons.” He asked that in the future books intended for him should be sent to the address of a friend of his in Belgrade—obviously a ruse to outwit censorship. One French sponsor, Librairie Armand Colin, reported that they had received no acknowledgements for the 20 copies of *Théâtre et destin* (Theatre and destiny) by Pierre-Henri Simon mailed to writers and actors in Bulgaria. A writer and one of the editors of the periodical *Nasha Rodina* (Our fatherland) received Priestley’s *Der Europäer und seine Literatur* (The European and his literature), but asked that future books be sent to the magazine’s address rather than to his home.<sup>67</sup> A woman writer stated that she had received three French books sent to her at the Union of Bulgarian Writers, but that *Petite histoire de la littérature française* by Henri Clouard had not arrived, because “the book was sent to my other address,” meaning her private address. Sometimes even dictionaries did not get through. A correspondent in Sofia wrote: “Until now I have not received the *Dictionnaire des difficultés grammaticales et lexicologiques* (Dictionary of grammatical and lexicological difficulties) which you were so kind as to send me.”<sup>68</sup>

Polish censorship continued to be haphazard rather than consistent, with controversial books arriving safely in one instance and being stopped in another. For example, the University Library in Warsaw wrote to the Institut Littéraire in Paris that two expected book parcels had not arrived. Yet the National Library in Warsaw acknowledged receipt of some controversial books (including one in Polish), and May 1926 by January Grzędziński, who was awaiting trial on charges

<sup>66</sup> April [1966] Highlights, dated May 11, 1966, 14, *ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>68</sup> June [1966] Highlights, dated July 19, 1966, 10–11, *ibid.*

of anti-communist activity in Poland. A series of letters by the head of the Historical Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences to the editor of *Kultura* also showed the confused state of Polish censorship. In one letter, he wrote that four books mailed to him by *Kultura* had been replaced en route from Paris to Poland with books published in Poland. "I protested because such acts are simply stealing." In another letter, he asked that back copies of *Kultura*, which he lacked, be given to a professor traveling to Paris to take back for him, though he hoped that future issues would arrive regularly by mail. Two more letters reported that an issue of *Kultura* had arrived by mail, as did two political books, Władysław Wielhorski's *Memoirs from Soviet Prisons* and Evan Luard's *The Cold War*.<sup>69</sup>

A writer in Warsaw reported that he had not received a biography of a Polish author of the nineteenth century that had been mailed to him. He wrote: "I wish to state that only books of a politically neutral character have a chance of arriving. Others would not pass the net; better not to mail them. It is good to inform me in advance about a mailing. Then I will be able to intervene through my union [Writers' Union]." <sup>70</sup> A check with the French postal authorities regarding books mailed to Poland and not acknowledged led to the information that the books had been confiscated by the Polish government as subversive material. The confiscated books included works on surrealism, twentieth-century painting, French literature, and contemporary French theatre.<sup>71</sup>

In his annual report for 1966, Minden referred to the censorship problem with regard to three of the eight target countries. He noted that Romanian censors had clamped down on books dealing directly with communism or Eastern Europe, while allowing books on the U.S. and on Western political affairs to enter. Because of increased censorship in the latter part of the year, fewer copies of political titles were sent, and only to institutions and established party and govern-

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<sup>69</sup> May [1966] Highlights, dated June 1, 1966, 1, *ibid*.

<sup>70</sup> June [1966] Highlights, dated July 19, 1966, 1, *ibid*.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

ment officials who were allowed to accept them.<sup>72</sup> Because of the increased and more rigid censorship in Poland, some Poles were fearful to acknowledge books, with acknowledgements for books received dropping from 24,135 in 1965 to 16,951 in 1966. Requests continued to arrive at about the same rate of approximately 11,000 each year.<sup>73</sup> Minden also noted a reduction in the number of requests from Hungary, and attributed it in part to increased censorship due to the tenth anniversary of the 1956 Revolution, which made Hungarians more fearful of writing to ask for books. Many political books that previously would have been accepted were returned to the senders.<sup>74</sup>

During the first two months of 1967, hundreds of books, all political titles, were returned by the Romanian censors. The rejected titles included *Histoire des doctrines politiques* by Gaetano Mosca and Gaston Bouthoul, the French translation of Arthur Schlesinger's *A Thousand Days*, *Essais sur les libertés* (Essays on freedom) by Raymond Aron, and *Dieu et l'homme d'aujourd'hui* (God and contemporary man) by Hans Urs von Balthazar. On the other hand, acknowledgements were received for other books of a similar nature, such as Sidney Hook's *Political Power and Personal Freedom*, and titles on American capitalism, the American political system, and politics in the twentieth century.<sup>75</sup> A number of Bulgarian correspondents reported that books had not arrived, either due to censorship or because they were stolen and sold on the black market. A lawyer in Sofia wrote that he had not received *Le théâtre nouveau en France* (The nouveau theatre in France) by Michel Corvin, which had been sent to him, and asked: "Perhaps it went astray?" A student stated that he had received some French books sent to him, but he added: "About American books I don't know anything. I have not received them yet though I wrote the letter two months ago [...] I think the books are lost somewhere. Maybe they are stolen."<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Free Europe, Inc., Publications and Special Projects Division, Annual Report for 1966 on the Book Distribution Program, 6. HIA, George Minden Collection.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 7–8.

<sup>75</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1967, dated March 17, 1967, 8, *ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

Many letters attested to ongoing censorship in Poland in 1967. A professor of French literature at Łódź University wrote that he had not received *Camus* by A. Nicholas. It seemed that the censors considered Albert Camus a dangerous author. A package with a set of six pamphlets on various writers, including Camus, mailed to Poland arrived, but the pamphlet on Camus had been removed. A letter sent by the Library of the Historical Institute of Łódź to the Historical Institute of London, a sponsor, lamented:

It is with the greatest regret that I must inform you that not one of the books mentioned in your letter has reached our library. No words can describe the disappointment with which the members of our staff studied the list of books sent by you. Also you may easily guess what their opinion was of the action of those responsible for this state of affairs. What makes our situation even more difficult is that the authorities, in confiscating books sent to us which they consider unsuitable, do not advise us of this. We are therefore unable to ascertain which books fail to reach us within the full sanction of the law and which are simply stolen by ordinary thieves. It is of some consolation, if one may put it this way, that libraries of a much higher standard than ours encounter similar difficulties.<sup>77</sup>

It seemed that books mailed to Hungary from the United States were more subject to censorship than books mailed from Europe. PSPD mailed 20 copies of *One Thousand Days* by Arthur Schlesinger from the U.S. and 30 copies of the German edition of the same book from Germany. The censors stopped all 20 copies of the American edition, while the 30 German copies all arrived.<sup>78</sup>

While there was no evidence of increased censorship in Czechoslovakia, it was evident that books were carefully screened. The fact that certain books would reach some individuals and not others showed that there was a blacklist of people whose mail was under stricter scrutiny. Ivan Sviták, who had been expelled from the

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<sup>77</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1967, dated May 10, 1967, 3.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 6.

Party and the Institute of Philosophy, complained to a French publisher that he had not received *Albert Camus ou le vrai Prométhée* (Albert Camus or the true Prometheus), while other Czechs to whom the same book was sent acknowledged its receipt. A revealing letter came from a man in Olomouc in Moravia: "I have spoken with my friends and they have demanded from me an unpleasure [sic] thing. All parcels from abroad, especially from Western countries, are controlled and noted by our local police department of the Inner Affairs Ministry. Some of them [his friends] were asked, why and from what sources you are able to send such books, etc. We have done such agreement, because we don't wish to be asked, that it will be better for you to send books only on my name, as I know how [what] to do [...] I will give all books for them [to his friends] [...] In the future I will write you name and need[ed] books for each of us." People complained openly when books did not arrive. One Prague correspondent acknowledged two books, but wrote that two others, Boris Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago* and *Archeology and Christian Humanism* by William Albright, had not arrived. "Thousand pities, because I should like to have those books, especially *Dr. Zhivago*." Another man, who did not receive the books sent to him, wrote: "I strongly suspect some fault on the railway [sic] undoubtedly must have occurred. I might stress that similar signs of railway blockade were quite frequent some five to ten years ago, being substantially more rare nowadays." Another letter said: "Maybe there was some trouble with our customs authorities." Books were also stolen. As an English professor in Prague, who did not receive an American dictionary, wrote: "Books and printed matter in this country coming from the U.S. are often lost unless, as I was told by the respective authorities, they are sent registered."<sup>79</sup>

A few Bulgarian correspondents reported that they had not received the books sent to them. The Metropolitan Paissi of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church wrote that he had not received the book *Cinq méditations sur l'existence* (Five meditations about existence) by Nikolai Berdyaev, and that he would be happy to receive the book offered, *Crainte et tremblement* (*Fear and Trembling*) by Søren Kierkegaard. Petko Stainov, a former foreign minister, wrote he had

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 7–8.



not received the Berdyaev book although he regularly received books from France. A student of English to whom the *Columbia-Viking Book Encyclopedia* and *Modern American Painting* had been sent, wrote: "I am sorry to say that so far I have neither got the books nor heard from you [...] these books are of great interest to me and I am sure that you are aware that they can hardly be obtained here."<sup>80</sup>

Several letters were received from Lithuania despite the censorship. A teacher in Vilnius wrote to the Galerie Lambert in Paris asking for three books chosen from their gift book order form, which she had received from Konstantinas Bogdanas, a sculptor in Vilnius. The latter had received the books sent to him but had never acknowledged their receipt. As a member of the Party Central Committee, he might have been afraid of having any contact with the West.<sup>81</sup> One Lithuanian correspondent, writing in Polish, said he had not received the book sent to him. He suspected that "some impolite person had taken it" and asked the sponsor to check with the post office.<sup>82</sup>

A number of letters from Poland showed that censorship continued. A historian in Warsaw, who did not receive *Approaches to History* by H. P. R. Finberg, wrote: "In the past, some of the historical books sent to me from Great Britain or the U.S. did reach me, though I also happen to know that some did not. The rules governing the confiscation of mail are rather confused; actually, any book at all, regardless of its topic, may disappear en route." The Library of the Historical Institute of Łódź University was even more explicit: "Regrettably it happens that books from the West do not reach us. We are unable to check whether they are stolen by thieves or are confiscated by the authorities because we get no answer to our queries. Other institutions encounter similar problems. We request therefore that you put in a complaint with the Post Office. Perhaps this system will be more suc-

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 14. Censors objected to 28 books being displayed at the U.S. book exhibit at the Poznan Fair, including President Kennedy's *Strategy for Peace*. The U.S. Embassy protested and the Ministry of Foreign Trade approved the book and apologized for its "mistake." The Poles also censored the BBC schedule and two Israeli books. Executive Committee to The President [Free Europe, Inc.], June 26, 1967. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records.

<sup>82</sup> Highlights Report May-June 1967, dated July 18, 1967, 15, *ibid.*

cessful than our pleas. I assure you that we acknowledge every book at the latest two or three days after its arrival.”<sup>83</sup>

While new evidence of tighter censorship in Czechoslovakia was received, there were also signs that people were less afraid to speak freely and to ask for confiscated books. A London sponsor noted that requests for works on politics, history, and philosophy had steadily increased, and added: “However, it seems to coincide with the decision of the Czechoslovak authorities to stop delivery of the very same type of works.” This combination of increased censorship and a new readiness to request books was made clear by a letter that arrived from a small town in Bohemia. After some delay and inquiry on his part, the writer had received four parcels: “I don’t doubt all parcels were held all the time in the transit post office in Prague. I could have had all the parcels pretty safe at home had they not included [some] books—a sort of ‘libri prohibiti.’ These books are Schlesinger’s *A Thousand Days*, Sorensen’s *Kennedy*, Le Carré’s *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*, and Fleming’s *From Russia with Love*. In their stead there were brief announcements enclosed reading ‘These foreign-prints were removed from this parcel because of unacceptable contents (name of the book). Any further complaint will have no effect.’ The books are to be considered confiscated of course. But naturally I will complain. Those Kennedy books are the most expected. Now I am glad you did not send *Churchill*, they would have confiscated it, too.”<sup>84</sup>

To bypass Romanian censorship, which had become increasingly severe, Minden began to mail controversial books in fewer copies while sending more titles of that sort, and to limit the recipients to institutions and libraries, party officials and ideologists, government function-

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 2–3. Despite the censorship, there were also many acknowledgements and requests, most of them from institutions, for political, economic, and other dangerous (from the censors’ viewpoint) books, including books on politics, the Soviet Union, Witos’s *Memoirs* in Polish, and the anti-communist émigré journal *Kultura*.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 8. The titles often confiscated or returned to the sender included *The Penguin Encyclopedia*, works on the history of World War II, any books on Winston Churchill (although several sets of his war memoirs had previously passed the censors), and all current books on John F. Kennedy, such as Schlesinger’s *A Thousand Days*.

aries, leading historians and academics, political magazines, and newspapermen. As a result, fewer volumes were returned from Romania.<sup>85</sup>

A letter to the editor published in the August 25, 1967 issue of *Kultúrny život*, the weekly of the Slovak Writers' Association in Bratislava, asked: "How is it possible that books and magazines from capitalist countries most of the time are not delivered to the addressees but to somebody else, libraries that include them in their collection, etc.? According to the International Postal Union Convention, which Czechoslovakia signed, mailings should be delivered to the addressee, or under precisely defined circumstances must be returned to the sender, otherwise it amounts to stealing. Or isn't that so?"<sup>86</sup>

On July 27, 1967, the cultural attaché of the Czechoslovak Embassy in London, a Mr. Sedlak, wrote to the International Book Fellowship, a sponsor, that he had heard from some Czechoslovak students in London that "there are sometimes some difficulties with your kind sending [of] your books to them to Czechoslovakia." He asked for "any information about your activities which could allow me to help to solve existing problems." IBF replied that it had no "basic difficulties," but that some books on English literature and on President Kennedy, histories of World War II, and *The Penguin Encyclopedia* had been returned as "inadmissible."<sup>87</sup> In his reply letter of October 20, 1967, Sedlak apologized for the delay, and wrote: "I think that you wrote to me about reasonable ideas and I shall do my best to explain the whole matter to our authorities in Prague, where I am going for ten days next week."

During the summer months, two books of the Time-Life World Library series—all 20 copies of *Greece* and 38 out of 40 copies of *West Germany*—were returned by the Romanian censor. The book on West Germany had been mailed to a cross-section of Romanian intellectuals

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 12. Political and other controversial books acknowledged dealt with the American press, the state and law, European parliamentary regimes, and the structure and function of a free trade area.

<sup>86</sup> Highlights Report July–August 1967, dated October 10, 1967, 7, *ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 8. Sedlak's reply in Highlights Report for November–December 1967, 11, *ibid.* The original letters of the Attaché and IBF's reply were forwarded by Minden to the President of Free Europe, Inc., and are missing from the George Minden Collection at the Hoover Institution Archives.

of German origin. Other books in the same series on Great Britain and Mexico passed the censors. 28 of the 30 copies of Sorensen's *Kennedy* were also returned, although a previous mailing of Schlesinger's *A Thousand Days* elicited a number of acknowledgements.<sup>88</sup> The only book returned by the censors in the fall of 1967 were 75 of the 80 copies of *A Brief History of the United States* by M. C. Escher. Similar books had not been rejected before.<sup>89</sup>

Although acknowledgements of political books by Polish libraries and organizations were common, censorship still continued in Poland, as indicated by many letters from individuals. A professor in Kraków wrote that the books sent to him had not arrived and wondered if it was the fault of the postal services. A priest wrote: "The other two books have been withheld. In my judgement because of the word 'history' in the titles." A sociologist in Warsaw reported: "Of the three titles you mention in your letter I have received only one [...] I have been trying to explain the case at my post office but without success." In other instances, the Catholic weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny* (General weekly) in Kraków informed *Kultura* that 109 books on religious questions had not reached them. The Polish translation of Gaëtan Picon's *Panorama des idées contemporaines*, which previously had no difficulties with the censors, was confiscated and the French post office informed the sponsor accordingly.<sup>90</sup>

There was further evidence of censorship in Czechoslovakia, while people seemed less afraid to protest against it. Books on and by Kennedy were rejected for "faulty content," but requests and an occasional acknowledgement for a copy that passed through were received. A correspondent wrote that he had not received *The Struggle for Europe* by Chester Wilmot and had been told by the post office that the book was "inadmissible." He commented: "As for myself, I am very sorry that this happened, especially in my country." Another correspondent was "very surprised" that the parcel with Bertrand Russell's *History of Western Philosophy* and Josef Maria Bochenski's *Contemporary European*

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>89</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1967, 1967, 12. The other five copies were received by the Institutes of History of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest and in Cluj.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 4–5.

*Philosophy* had been returned soon after some of Russell's articles had been published in Czech in his country. He informed "our responsible authorities and asked them to explain [to] you this inexcusable demeanor," and then asked that the books be sent to a Czech friend visiting England who would take them back to Czechoslovakia. A member of the Institute of Endocrinology in Prague, who received a parcel of books, including George Orwell's *Collected Essays* and Bochenski's *Contemporary European Philosophy*, informed the sponsor that the parcel had been re-addressed to the director of the Library of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and had been delivered to him, the original addressee, only through an error on the part of the mailman. He then went to see Dr. Boldis, the director of the library involved, who "readily admitted that some books [which]—for some reason or other—could not be delivered to the addressee, are often sent to the library of the Academy or, perhaps, to other libraries, too. This is practiced without the knowledge of the sender or the primary addressee. In the last year I presumably lost about eight books, sent mostly from the U.S., probably in the above-described way."<sup>91</sup>

At the end of the year, Polish censorship continued to be severe and often unpredictable, with the arrival of acknowledgements for political books while presumably innocuous books were being barred. The French post office notified a sponsor that several books mailed by them had been confiscated. Surprisingly, the addressee was Eugeniusz Kwiatkowski, a well-known communist and pre-war vice-premier who was in favor with the regime. Two of the books—one on architecture, the other on theatre—were non-political. A doctor in southern Poland complained that he was getting copies of *Paris Match*, to which he had been given a subscription, only sporadically. He suggested that his name and address be printed on the first few pages of each copy to discourage people from stealing it. Polish recipients frequently pressed the authorities for confiscated books. A professor at the Catholic University in Lublin wrote: "I am so glad that

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 9. The London sponsor IBF reported that hardly any parcel had been returned from Czechoslovakia after it stopped sending the three most "undesirable" titles, namely *Kennedy*, Bochenski's *Contemporary European Philosophy*, and *The Penguin Encyclopedia*.

as a result of my appeal two books formerly confiscated were delivered to me.”<sup>92</sup>

The experience of a young Polish lady who had visited a sponsor in Paris and had taken some books back to Poland showed that customs officials could be at times quite easy-going. She wrote: “As for the books, I wanted many of them but some I was simply afraid to take. For the same reason I took only one issue of *Kultura*—fascinating. As it turned out, at the customs inspection nobody was interested in my books at all, and I was simply furious with myself for not having taken more books.”<sup>93</sup>

From RFE’s Information Item No. 2098/67, Minden gained useful information about the regulations followed in the “prohibited section” of the Warsaw University reading room. A student could obtain newspapers on the prohibited list if he had a letter from the dean of his department explaining why he needed access to the particular paper for his research. Most of the Polish émigré periodicals published in the West were deposited in the “prohibited section,” while Polish books published in the West were kept in the “rare books” section and were available only with the permission of the librarian. According to the source of the information, he was always able to get foreign language books without any particular difficulty even though the books were considered “outrageous” by the communist authorities. He said the reading room was well supplied with French publications and to a lesser degree with British newspapers, while American newspapers were not as fully represented. The London monthly *Encounter* was in the “prohibited section,” but the Parisian *Preuves*, published by the Congress of Cultural Freedom, was available in the open reading room—an indication that the country of origin of the publication affected the degree of censorship applied.<sup>94</sup>

Kazimierz Romanowicz, the owner of the Galerie Lambert, provided more information about the way the “prohibited sections” of Polish libraries operated. Poles visiting Paris told him that French books mailed to Polish libraries were available to readers and not

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<sup>92</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1967, 4. The books were *Ces chrétiens mes frères* [These Christians my brothers] by Daniel Rops and *La philosophie morale* [Moral philosophy] by Jacques Maritain.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 4–5.

placed in the “prohibited materials” sections. Some books in Polish, and particularly anti-communist books published by the Institut Littéraire in Paris, did end up in the “prohibited section.” Romanowicz was told by professors, students, and writers “that access to these books is quite easy on presenting an identification card, and if the number of readers is limited, it is chiefly because the library has only one, or at most two, copies of the book.” He learned that “prohibited materials” sections existed only at National Libraries or at some special libraries, and that Polish books at the Writers’ Union Library in Kraków were available to all readers. On the basis of his recent conversations with visiting employees of the National Library and the Parliament Library in Warsaw, the Library of Art in Kraków, and the Writers’ Association libraries in Warsaw and Kraków, Romanowicz knew for certain that the French books they received were extremely popular with their readers. Some professors were of the same opinion when they mentioned to him that they had read this or that book in a library, and told him that they sometimes gave the books sent to them to libraries “so that more people may use them.”<sup>95</sup>

Hungarian books published in the West were especially subject to censorship and elicited fewer responses. This may have been the reason for the decrease in the number of requests for the extremely popular Hungarian translation of Gaëtan Picon’s *Panorama des idées contemporaines*.<sup>96</sup> Only 21 requests were received during the last two months of 1967, and a single acknowledgement for the same book by a doctor hinted that the censors were active. He wrote: “Sorry, I was kept back by something from writing you immediately having received Gaëtan Picon’s book. I’m not to say about it.” He asked that in the future books be sent not to his home but to his office in the Pediatric Department of the University of Szeged. Interestingly, seven spontaneous requests were received for the new Hungarian translation of *In the Whirlpool of Unity* by Roger Schutz, a book on ecumenism, the publication of which was announced in the bulletin sent to Hungarian parishes by the Catholic Church. The requests, all sent by Hungarian priests, were addressed to the publisher in Munich.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.



Books rejected by the Romanian censors in the last two months of 1967 included 15 copies of a dictionary of philosophy, 15 copies of a dictionary of contemporary history, and 20 copies of an introduction to social psychology, all in German. A few copies of *Dictionnaire de la philosophie* (Dictionary of philosophy) by Didier and *Proust par lui-même* (Proust by himself) were also turned down, while some political books on political thought and on Marxism and humanism went through.<sup>98</sup> Censorship continued to remain active in Bulgaria, with six packages containing 12 books confiscated, most of them French books on art, architecture, and sociology. One correspondent complained that he did not receive three French books on modern French literature and on the cinema that had been sent to him from Paris.<sup>99</sup>

In his annual report for 1967, Minden wrote that censorship continued throughout the year, but that there was no absolute consistency in its application. Some books likely to be on the censor's list were returned, yet the same title was acknowledged by other addressees. Because the mailing of political books to individuals in Poland was heavily censored, the majority of such books were sent to organizations. Mailings of religious and other books sent to clergymen and religious institutions were particularly affected by Hungarian censorship, albeit with intermittent periods when censorship was relaxed. Censorship continued throughout the year in Czechoslovakia, but like in other countries, there was no absolute consistency in its application. Censorship continued in an erratic fashion in Romania, resulting in the sending of fewer political books to institutions and individuals allowed more freedom in their readings.<sup>100</sup>

In 1968, sponsors carried on a constant struggle with the Polish censors by continuous attempts to check whether books were being delivered. They wrote letters to book addressees asking if the books mailed had been received. In some cases, this resulted in belated

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>100</sup> George C. Minden, undated Annual Report Calendar Year 1967 on the Book Distribution Program, Free Europe, Inc. Publications & Special Projects Division, Office of the Director. See pages 20 on Poland, 24 on Hungary, 28 on Czechoslovakia, and 30 on Romania.



acknowledgements; in others, they learned that the books had been stolen or confiscated. When books were sent by registered mail, the sponsors asked the post office to check on the missing books. Again, results were mixed—they learned that some books had been delivered, while others had been confiscated, with the Paris post office sending notifications to the Libella bookstore.<sup>101</sup> 48 out of 50 sets of *History of the U.S., Vols. I–II*, by T. H. William were returned by the Hungarian censors, as well as nine out of ten copies of *La Russie au tournant de l'histoire* (Russia at the turn of history) by Alexandre Kerenski.<sup>102</sup>

There was little change in Czechoslovak censorship. Some books continued to be confiscated, but then occasionally an acknowledgement was received for a title that previously had been stopped by the censors. The pocket *Penguin Encyclopedia* remained high on the blacklist, but some acknowledgements arrived for it. One acknowledgement for Thomson's *Europe Since Napoleon* and one for Ted Sorensen's *Kennedy* arrived, though other copies were stopped. Addressees often notified the sponsors when books had been confiscated. A Prague correspondent wrote that he had received three books, and continued: "At the same time I received an announcement from the specialized post office that the fourth book [Bochenski's *Contemporary European Philosophy*] had been confiscated because of ideological reasons. After my intervention I was promised that the book would be sent to the library of the Academy [among the prohibited books] and that I should probably have priority in borrowing it. In this connection I was told that there was no general rules or indexes and that every book was considered individually." Another correspondent acknowledged the receipt of some books, but added: "Unfortunately, the novel *Dr. Zhivago* by Pasternak was not found as it was confiscated by our authorities according to their message." Other books that had been confiscated included *Theory and Practice of Communism* by R. N. Hunt, Orwell's *Animal Farm*, *The Taste of Power* by Ladislav Mňačko, and *Der moderne Mensch und seine Zukunft* (Modern man and his future) by Erich Fromm.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>101</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1968, dated March 14, 1968, 4, *ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 12. Mňačko left Czechoslovakia in 1967 in protest against the regime's support of the Arabs against Israel.

The Hungarian censors returned 48 out of 50 two-volume sets of *History of the U.S.* by T. H. Williams, and nine out of ten copies of *La Russie au tournant de l'histoire* by Alexandre Kerenski. Occasional letters of complaint continued to arrive from addressees in Romania, stating that they had not received the books mailed to them. Some of these books were relatively innocuous, like *La peinture au Louvre* (Painting in the Louvre), *Petit Larousse illustré*, or *La peinture au Prado* (Painting in the Prado), raising the possibility that they had been stolen rather than confiscated. Ten copies of *Problèmes chrétiens* (Christian problems) by Guy de Broglie, and 30 copies of *Visages de l'Europe* (Faces of Europe) by Henri Brugman were returned by the censors. Severe censorship continued to prevail in Bulgaria, where ten books sent to five different addresses were seized by the censors. These included *La France historique et culturelle* (Historical and cultural France), *Panorama des arts plastique* (Panorama of plastic arts), and Camus's *La peste* (*The Plague*). A Bulgarian professor visiting Paris informed the sponsor that "Books are stolen and sold at high prices on the back market. The post office usually blames the censors, but in fact most of the books are stolen while in the post office."<sup>104</sup>

A number of letters received in the spring of 1967 attested that censorship continued in Poland. A writer on the staff of the Wrocław magazine *Odra* wrote: "I am in despair that the book *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* by Ernest Cassirer did not reach me. I am in despair, it was so badly needed [...] Please send books to me always by registered mail, otherwise there is no possibility of checking." The Agricultural College in Olsztyn wrote that it had not received *Economic Report of the President*. "If this book was sent by registered mail, kindly try to find out from the post office where it got stuck. We attach special importance to American publications [...] There is only one university in Olsztyn and therefore our library should be well provided." The University Library of Łódź wrote that they had received only one book, Arnold Toynbee's *Change and Habit*, out of several sent to them. "We are taking steps at the Polish offices concerned. We hope that the fact that books were not delivered will not discourage you from continuing

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 8 on Hungary, 16 on Romania, and 19 on Bulgaria.

your mailings [...] We have good reason to believe that in the future our library will have no trouble with receipt of books from abroad.”<sup>105</sup>

The Prague Spring of 1968 also had an impact on Minden’s book mailing program. Though censorship in Czechoslovakia had not been officially abolished, the mail received from there gave evidence that it had been relaxed, at least temporarily. Acknowledgements of receipt arrived for a number of books that until then had been stopped by the censors and confiscated. Among them were Pasternak’s *Dr. Zhivago*, Sorensen’s *Kennedy*, Bochenski’s *Contemporary Philosophy*, and the *Penguin Encyclopedia*, which now seemed to arrive safely. Not only books but also mail, previously held by the censors, was being delivered. A gift order form offering a choice from a list of books, mailed to Czechoslovakia in April 1964, was returned, and several replies were received to gift order forms mailed in October 1966 and in February 1967.

The change in the Czechoslovak government’s attitude was reflected in several candid letters reporting that books previously intercepted by the censors had at last been delivered to the addressees. One Prague correspondent wrote: “By the way, a great many books ‘lost’ by Post Office No. 120 have been returned to some of my friends again—even complete with letters of apology. Quite unbelievable, isn’t it.”<sup>106</sup> Another correspondent in Kynsperk wrote: “Finally I can report to you this happy news. Yesterday I received all, really all the books which had been confiscated a year or so ago [...] I had to write many letters first, to the Prague post office, then to the president of the republic, and recently to the ministry of culture. And only this final letter helped. It is due to the ‘democratization process’ which is under way here recently. One can but hope it will never stop. I hope also that all the books I may want from you or rather all the books you may send me in the future will reach me without having to ask the president for them.” A professor in Prague wrote: “I am interested especially in one book, *Contemporary European Philosophy* by Bochenski, which you have already sent me last year. It was then ‘excluded from delivery because

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<sup>105</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1968, dated May 10, 1968, 4. The Hungarian censors returned 17 out of 25 copies of *The Valley of Silence: Catholic Thought in Contemporary Poland*, edited by James Zlatko, mailed to Catholic bishoprics, seminaries, libraries, and periodicals. *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>106</sup> This and the next quotation are from *ibid.*, 8.

of objectionable content,' but today I hope I shall receive it." A professor in Uherské Hradiště in Moravia wrote: "I hope that after the 'cold revolution' in our country and after loosening of censorship it may be possible to receive some books for which I am longing already [a] long time [...]." <sup>107</sup>

Nevertheless, some censorship still appeared to persist. According to an RFE monitoring report, an editor of the Prague weekly *Reporter*, Stanislav Budín, declared at a public meeting held in Prague on April 17, 1968, that censorship persisted and that "it is a disgrace that such a state of affairs continues to exist." Another RFE report stated that "The Union of Czechoslovak Journalists and the Central Publications Board have reached agreement that, as of March 18, foreign newspapers slated for Czechoslovak editorial offices will pass without interference by the Board." This specific exemption from censorship in this one instance led Minden to conclude that there had been no overall abolition of censorship. The continuation of censorship was confirmed by a complaint letter sent to the editor of *Kultúrný život* (Cultural life), a literary weekly in Bratislava, by one Anton Vantuch. He wrote: "I would like to call attention to the freedom of information which was not observed in the past and, I am afraid, is not observed even now. Shipments of books mailed from abroad disappeared [...] I thought this was no longer possible, but on March 20 I received from *Esprit* in Paris a note stating that the Czechoslovak post office returned numbers one to ten of the magazine as 'non admis.'" The editor of the weekly then published a comment on the letter, saying: "Back in 1967 *Kultúrný život* said there was something rotten [sic] at Post Office 120 in Prague [...] We appealed to Comrade František Jirsa of the Central Publications Administration, who acted under the name of Post office Prague 120, to explain what has been done to normalize this problem so that at last we will fall into step with the civilized world."<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 8. He listed *Animal Farm* by Orwell, *The New Class* and *Conversations with Stalin* by Djilas, *Road to Serfdom* by Friedrich Hayek, *Evolution in Science and Religion* by Robert A. Millikan, *Man Against Mass Society* by Gabriel Marcel, *A Man Against Insanity* by Paul de Kruif, and all books written by President Kennedy as well as the report about the investigation of his death.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 9.

Minden reported other signs of liberalization in Czechoslovakia. Books that previously were not allowed to enter the country, such as Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago*, were translated into Czech, and Ladislav Mňačko's *Taste of Power* was translated into both Czech and Slovak. Some books by Czech and Slovak authors previously blacklisted were also published. These included Karel Čapek's *Conversations with T. G. Masaryk*, books by Václav Černý, a non-communist literary critic, novels by Jan Cep and the late Zdeněk Němeček, both of whom left the country after the communist coup in 1948, and the novelist Egon Hostovský, who lived in New York.<sup>109</sup>

Minden was quick to react to the liberalization process under way during the so-called Prague Spring, and he wrote in his report to the President of Free Europe, Inc.: "The changes now in process in Czechoslovakia present us with an unparalleled opportunity. Not only can we mail books which previously have been stopped by the censors, but we also have the opportunity to attempt to influence—in some small degree—the thinking and hence the course of action of the Czechoslovak leaders." Referring to the public debate that would determine the country's future political system, he reported: "[...] during March and April [1968], we scheduled many books on political science and law, including some on the American constitution and party systems, on elections, on democratic theory." The targets were journalists, television and radio announcers, political scientists, and individuals involved in the political process in Czechoslovakia. Minden singled out a research team set up at the Institute of State and Law of the Academy of Sciences, whose task was to study a "new political model" to serve as a basis for drafting new laws. Accordingly, he decided to send books to the head of the team, Zdeněk Mlynář, a secretariat member of the party's Central Committee and one of the leading advocates of a pluralistic system, as well as to other members of this team.<sup>110</sup> Minden's PSPD also set up two new sponsors—orga-

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 9, *Lidová demokracie*, March 1968, and *Rudé právo*, April 11, 1968. Hostovský received a request from Václav Černý for a copy of his work *The Midnight Patient* (in Czech). Černý wrote he planned to write an article for a Prague literary magazine on the occasion of Hostovsky's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday.

<sup>110</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1968, dated May 10, 1968, 14. Free Europe President John Richardson Jr. promptly forwarded Minden's

nizations it created without open affiliation with Free Europe—to be used for special mailings to Czechoslovakia. One was the “Service for Students and Teachers,” with a post office box address in New York, to act as sponsor for a special offer to be mailed to teachers and students. The offer simply asked if they were interested in receiving books free of charge and, if so, to indicate the subjects they were interested in, using a list provided with the offer. The other sponsor, to be known as “The Literary Circle,” with an address in New York, was to be used solely for replying to requests for books received by Radio Free Europe.<sup>111</sup>

During the same period, the Romanian censors turned down fewer books. However, all 20 copies of the four-volume *Les grands courants de l'histoire universelle* (The great currents of universal history) were rejected. Occasionally, books previously allowed to enter the country were returned, for example *De Proust à Camus* (From Proust to Camus). Letters complaining that books sent had not been received continued to arrive from Bulgaria. One of the editors of *La Bulgarie d'aujourd'hui* (Bulgaria today) in Sofia wrote that he had not received *Cinquième Biennale de Paris* (Fifth Paris Biennale), and asked: “Please send me the number and other details concerning this mailing so that I myself can make the necessary check here on the spot.” An architect wrote: “It is my duty to tell you that your parcel #1209 of March 2, 1967, sent from postal station No. 28 in Paris, arrived in our country. But our postal authorities have told me that it is impossible for me to receive the package. And I ask you not to pursue this question further. If you intend in the future to write to me or send me books on architecture, urbanism, or art, please send them to me at the office where I work.” A Latvian architect in Riga acknowledged the receipt of books on *The Tate Gallery* and *The National Gallery, London*, but wrote that a second parcel sent to him had not arrived.<sup>112</sup>

Genuine liberty of the press occurred briefly during the 1968 Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia. In June, the Czechoslovak govern-

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Report to Washington, with emphasis on the changes in Czechoslovakia. The President to the Executive Committee, May 16, 1968, 1. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 11–12.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 14 on Romania, 16 on Bulgaria, and 17 on Latvia.

ment abolished the censorship office in place since 1953, and the move was confirmed by Law No. 84/1988, dated June 26, 1968. As a result, many books previously stopped by the censors were allowed to enter Czechoslovakia in May and June, but there was evidence that some censorship still persisted. The International Book Fellowship, a sponsor in London, reported that some history books were still being stopped, including *Europe Since Napoleon*, *Dictionary of Modern History*, and Leon Uris's *Six Day War*. On May 8, 1968, Radio Prague reported that the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences complained in a letter to the prime minister about the difficulties in obtaining foreign books. The letter asked that regulations excluding "anti-state and harmful" literature should not be applied to books sent to the Academy's library and to other scientific libraries—an indication that censorship was still in effect in May 1968. At the same time, some books mailed in 1967 or even earlier were being delivered by the post office and acknowledgements were coming in, including for such books as *Dr. Zhivago*, Orwell's *Animal Farm*, Gajo Petrovic's *Marx in the Mid-Century*—all of which had been confiscated before. A correspondent in Rychnov wrote: "In December 1967 you sent me three books including *Europe Since Napoleon* by David Thompson. But this book was confiscated by the post office in Prague. Now when the political situation is better in our country, I applied for this book and really it was delivered to me yesterday." A Prague correspondent wrote: "Thanks to the renaissance of common sense in Czechoslovakia, I have just received *Les cent jours de Kennedy* [Kennedy's hundred days] which you had sent me on October 4, 1967."<sup>113</sup>

During the same two-month period, censors remained vigilant in the other target countries. The Hungarian postal authorities returned 61 out of 75 copies of *Második Avenue* (Second Avenue), a novel in Hungarian by Péter Halász, an editor at RFE in New York. Only two acknowledgements were received for the novel that dealt with a Hungarian family that left Hungary in 1956 and settled successfully in New York. The book was much in demand among Hungarian vis-

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<sup>113</sup> May–June [1968] Highlights, dated July 12, 1968. References to the changes in Czechoslovak censorship figured pre-eminently in the letter Free Europe President Richardson sent to Washington with Minden's May–June [1968] Highlights Report. The President to The Executive Committee, July 22, 1968, 1, *ibid*.



itors to the West, and some 150 copies had been distributed by the end of June 1968. The Bulgarian censors confiscated seven parcels, containing a total of 17 books, during May and June 1968. The titles stopped included *La France historique et culturelle* by Jacques Boussard, *La chirurgie d'aujourd'hui* (Contemporary surgery) by Jean Auvert, *Paris* by Pierre Lavedan, and *National Gallery de Washington* by John Walker. A journalist in Lithuania who acknowledged five books and asked for 11 more, all French literary works, reported that only one book, written by Oscar Milosz, a French poet of Lithuanian descent, had been confiscated. Throughout 1968, all three Baltic republics remained under rigid Soviet censorship, as a result of which little mail was received and even less acknowledgements of receipt.<sup>114</sup>

Unfortunately, the Highlights Report for July and August 1968, the month the Warsaw Pact forces invaded and occupied Czechoslovakia, is missing from the RFE/RL Corporate Records. In his next bi-monthly report, Minden stated that except for the first week or so after the invaders' arrival on August 21, the invasion had had no obvious effect on the book program and there was no interruption in mailing activities. Postal authorities seemed to cooperate with the public in disregarding restrictive measures officially proclaimed to placate the Russians. Postal services had not been disrupted, first-class airmail was delivered within three or four days after being posted, and acknowledgements were received for as many as two-thirds of the books sent. There seemed to have been no change in censorship, which was still at work, but not more active than before the invasion. Minden's representative in London wrote: "So far we have not experienced any new type of censorship, though we hear that books in Czech from abroad are banned; only two people have asked for temporary suspension of subscriptions to periodicals, not cancellation." Even so, 13 copies of the book *XI. Vsesokolsky slet* (XI<sup>th</sup> all-Sokol gathering) were acknowledged, while a cautious art historian in Benešov wrote to Galerie Lambert in French and asked the sponsor to send him books "which would not arouse the attention of the censors."<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 8 on Hungary, 19 on Bulgaria, and 20 on Lithuania.

<sup>115</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1968, dated November 11, 1968, 10. The Sokol [Falcon] movement is a Czech youth movement and gymnastics organization founded in 1862. It was suppressed by the communists. The XV<sup>th</sup> Sokol gathering took place in Prague on July 1–6, 2012.



Polish censorship persisted but remained erratic, making it very difficult to be sure when a lack of response was the result of caution or of censorship. After André Malraux's *Antimémoires* were mailed, only a few receipts were acknowledged. When the sponsor Libella asked the French postal authorities to check, it received confirmation of the receipt of 28 copies of the book that had not been acknowledged. Similarly, when addressees were asked to confirm whether they had received apparently uncontroversial books mailed to them, the result only confirmed the existence of erratic censorship. Four cards, picked at random, showed that some addressees had received everything that was sent to them, while others crossed out as "not received" the bulk of the shipments dispatched to them.

At the same time, Tadeusz Manteuffel, professor at the History Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences, had an extensive exchange of correspondence with the editor of *Kultura* in Paris, with a total disregard for the censors. Many official institutions also received without trouble whatever was sent to them. Out of concern about the censors, a French teacher confirmed while she was in Paris that she had received a Larousse, which she felt constrained not to acknowledge while she was in Poland. Another writer in Poland sent a card to thank for a book and then took pains to cross out her address from the postcard before mailing it. Minden's only safe conclusion was that "censorship in Poland still exists, is exercised unpredictably, and that people were still wary. The only sure recipients of books were official institutions and those whose political credentials are impeccable."<sup>116</sup>

Though Minden's sponsors warned Polish visitors of the risk of taking controversial books home, their warnings were generally disregarded. One woman reported back to a Paris sponsor: "I passed all borders unmolested, which was rather a pleasant surprise [...] Polish customs officials did not even ask me to open my suitcase." On the other hand, another visitor had his bags searched and every book was confiscated. Yet another visitor in Rome learned Kazimierz Wierzyński's long poem "Black Polonaise" by heart rather than risk taking a copy of it home. Many Polish visitors who were fearful of

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 4–5.

taking home controversial books took the opportunity to read them in the reading room of the Librairie Polonaise in Paris.<sup>117</sup>

There was no blanket ban put by Hungarian censors on any book sent. The number of unsolicited requests for Gaëtan Picon's *Korunk szellemi körképe* rose from 14 in July and August to 27 in September and October, and the number of acknowledgements went up from 31 to 77 during the same period. It thus seemed that the censors were more lenient with Hungarian books published in the West. This was confirmed by the fact that several unsolicited requests for *Napló 1945–1957* (Diary 1945–1957) by Sándor Márai, an émigré writer, arrived after the book was reviewed in *Élet és Irodalom* in Budapest. There were no signs of censorship in Romania, and even the most obvious targets for it got through: controversial, political books. The only books returned were sent back because of address changes. Bulgarian censors remained active and four packages, containing a total of 15 books, were seized, while two books were returned because of address change. Most copies of *Olympiade 1968 Grenoble* that were mailed failed to reach their destination, but PSPD learned that this well-illustrated album was being sold at an inflated price on the black market. As a result, several readers asked for the book to be sent to them by “registered mail, otherwise it might go astray.” A letter from a correspondent in Lithuania stated that he had not received the works by Malraux and Picon that he had asked for, and went on to request 11 more titles.<sup>118</sup>

With the level of mailings and responses from Poland remaining much the same throughout 1968, Minden concluded that the censors' activities also remained at the same level. While the number of responses was not particularly gratifying, it was known that many more books reached their destination than were acknowledged. A number of recipients were cautious and reluctant to respond not only because of the censors, but also out of lethargy and out of concern about the possible consequences of having contacts with the West. Some sponsors received confirmation through the postal authorities that unacknowledged books sent by registered mail had in fact been delivered, even though nothing was heard from the addressees. Because mailed

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 5–6.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 16 on Hungary, 22 on Romania, 25 on Bulgaria, and 30 on Lithuania.

books were liable to be stopped by the censors, two-thirds of the books on politics and international affairs were distributed directly to East European visitors to the West rather than posted. Another hazard to the book operation was implicit in a letter from a Jewish professor of German philology at the University of Warsaw, Emil Adler, who wrote to a sponsor asking them not to send further books to him "for the time being." It was likely that as a Jew, he had lost his university appointment in the latest anti-Semitic drive in Poland and may have been in some sort of trouble.<sup>119</sup>

No tightening of censorship was observed in Czechoslovakia at the end of 1968, but some correspondents had forebodings about the future. An economist in Prague wrote: "Till now all books and magazines from foreign countries come very quickly. But we are afraid that in a certain time the situation might change." From another addressee: "As yet there are no objections to our receiving any literature from the Western countries but nobody knows how long this will go on." A soldier commented ironically: "I am in the compulsory military service (in that army which could not protect this country the second time, already) [...] I am not sure if you will get this letter, or if I will normally get some other books of you in the future. Surely I would not like it if your noble activity would result in enriching the paper-stock of [an] ignorant Russian censor." Other correspondents remained more confident, as shown by a letter from Liberec: "The political situation in our country is serious but as long as our government is allowed to govern we are sure to receive all the books sent from abroad." Highly political books were actually still getting through, as well as such Russian-language publications as *The New Review*, Andrei Sakharov's essay on the position of Russian intellectuals, and books by Churchill and Orwell that were banned under Antonín Novotný.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1968, dated January 15, 1969, 5. Institutions were much less circumspect than individuals and sent long lists of requests, many of them for books of a political nature that would have been seized by the censors if mailed to individuals.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 12. The November 18, 1968 issue of *Zemědělské noviny*, Prague, published a notice that "printed matter [books, magazines] [...] is customs-free up to a [weight] limit of 5 kilograms [11 pounds]."

Hungarian censors remained vigilant about the political content of books, particularly after the events of August 1968. A set of Churchill's *History of the Second World War* mailed from London was returned "non admis," and so was a set sent from New York in response to a request. Censors were still on the lookout for Hungarian émigré books and periodicals, and acknowledgements for such books were seldom received. It was difficult to ascertain whether they had been confiscated by the censors, stolen by post office personnel, or delivered without being acknowledged—probably a combination of all three. Requests for Picon's *Korunk szellemi körképe* remained at the same level (28 in November–December 1968 as compared to 27 in the previous two months), but acknowledgements dropped from 77 to 54. Censors were slightly more lenient with mailings from the U.S. and West Germany, while material from England and France seemed to get through relatively more lightly.<sup>121</sup>

A painter in Budapest sent a detailed complaint to a Paris sponsor about malpractices by the Hungarian postal authorities. She had received a parcel supposedly weighing 200 grams that weighed only 135 grams, without any note that it had arrived "damaged," with the three art books she had requested missing, together with the usual receipt which was usually sent to acknowledge the receipt of books. She wrote: "Should you receive such a receipt, it will not have been written by me and will be false. I am beside myself at this unheard of behavior by certain Hungarian post office workers, who indeed have the right to check parcels coming from abroad but not the right to 'confiscate' art books arbitrarily. The Hungarian post office will say: 'The registered parcel reached the addressee, who signed for its delivery.' That's true but that's exactly why it is such unheard of behavior, for I may not open a parcel to check that its contents are all there until I have signed the receipt for the mailman." She asked the sponsor to complain to the Hungarian post office and claimed that this

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 17. Shortly after the Soviet-led invasion, the Czech National Assembly cancelled Article 17 of Law No.84/1968 about the impermissibility of censorship and created two new separate censorship offices, the Office for Press and Information and the Slovak Office for Press and Information.

was not the first time that parcels from abroad had not reached her.<sup>122</sup> This case seemed to indicate that some intervention in the mail was capricious. It was hard to see a political reason behind it, but rather, it was the result of postal theft, as art books commanded a tempting price in second-hand bookshops.

Bulgarian censors remained active throughout 1968, including the last two months of the year, apparently on the basis of blacklists. Controversial titles sent to institutions or persons of note passed the censors, but the same books mailed to persons of lesser importance were confiscated. In the last two months of the year, 26 paperbacks were impounded for no apparent reason. Many of them were books on art or philosophy that had reached other recipients in the past, and some of them may have been rerouted to the flourishing black market. A correspondent wrote to Galerie Lambert that he still had not received the books mailed to him, and surmised that if they had been sent as non-registered printed matter, “they probably might have ‘lost their way’ because French books are not sold in Bulgaria and their price on the black market is twice their commercial value.”<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 25.

## PART II: THE CENSORS 1969 TO 1973

In his detailed bi-monthly reports for 1969 and his subsequent semi-annual reports from January 1970 to June 30, 1973, the last complete semi-annual report available at the Hoover Institution Archives, Minden continued to include valuable and revealing information about communist censorship activities in the countries targeted by the book distribution project.

All the printed matter directed at Eastern Europe ultimately had a political character, and 49% of the books distributed in 1969 contained political content. They included works on politics and international affairs, history, religion, philosophy, sociology, economics, business, and labor and trade unionism. Because the mail was subject to censorship, the bulk (some 82%) of the books on politics and international affairs were distributed directly (or person-to-person) to East European visitors to the West. In all, over 46,600 political books were mailed and directly handed over in 1969.<sup>124</sup>

Because of the repressive political climate in Poland in the preceding years, many recipients had been inhibited in their dealings with sponsors. While individuals were more cautious, institutions such as the Academy of Sciences, universities and schools, as well as libraries and cultural institutions, seemed quite unconcerned. There was a growing responsiveness, and acknowledgements of receipt for

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<sup>124</sup> George C. Minden, Annual Report Calendar Year 1969 on the Book Distribution Program, Free Europe Inc., PSPD, Office of the Director, p. 10. HIA, George Minden Collection.

the books mailed rose from 34% in 1968 to 46.3% in 1969. In reality, far more books were being delivered than acknowledged, as shown by checks through the postal authorities, and many Polish visitors thanked for the books they received while being in the West instead of writing from home.<sup>125</sup> Despite the increasingly conservative climate in Czechoslovakia, there was little evidence of a tightening of postal censorship, and the book project was more successful than expected. As a result of the “normalization,” however, correspondents were less outspoken in their criticism of the political situation and cautious about asking for political books.<sup>126</sup> In Hungary, tension waned in the aftermath of the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia and was followed by a relatively liberal political climate and relaxed censorship. The authorities seldom took exception to Hungarian-language works published in the West, which were often stopped by the censors in the past, and the number of unsolicited requests increased.<sup>127</sup> In 1969, there was a remarkable upsurge of interest in the book distribution project. Almost half (48.6%) of all mail received that year came from Romania, and put a severe strain on PSPD’s capacity to cope with it. Controversial titles mailed to top government and party officials, university libraries, official organizations, institutes of the Academy of Sciences, and newspapers, were delivered without difficulty. Hungarian-language books sent to ethnic Magyars in Romania also arrived, and were no longer intercepted by the censors.<sup>128</sup> Bulgaria remained the most rigid target country, with even tighter controls after a relative relaxation in 1968. The bulk of the more politically controversial books and periodicals were sent to important officials, the Academy of Sciences, and university libraries, which generally escaped the attention of the censors.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 10–11.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 16–17. In April 1969, Josef Havlín, an orthodox apparatchik, replaced Josef Vohnut as chief of the Czech Office for Press and Information in charge of censorship. Active since 1951 in the Party Central Committee apparatus, Havlín became a Central Committee candidate member in 1966 and was dismissed from the party secretariat and the CC’s ideological commission in June 1968. East Europe Research, Czechoslovak Unit to H[erbert]. Read, April 16, 1969.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 20–2.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

Minden's more detailed bi-monthly Highlights Reports contain much revealing information about the censors' efforts to stop the entry of unwanted "subversive" literature sent or brought in from the West. In the spring of 1969, Polish censors remained vigilant but a number of controversial titles managed to get through. Their one constant characteristic was their unpredictability. This is shown by an acknowledgement of the Institute of History of Copernicus University in Toruń, which said that it had received Pierre Gaxotte's *Geschichte Deutschlands und der Deutschen* with the comment that it was the first book it had received in six months. The department of English Philology of the University of Wrocław thanked for five books, and added: "The package also contained a decision of the Customs bureau of the Warsaw Post Office dated February 8, 1969, on the forfeiture of printed matter weighing 0.71 kilograms with an explanation that 'possession and dissemination of the above-mentioned printed matter are forbidden on Polish customs territory.'" <sup>130</sup> Outspoken comments about censorship were made by a Polish lady: "I returned to Poland in June of last year and since then no issue of *Kultura* has reached me, and no notification from the post office that *Kultura* had been confiscated. I suppose that under these circumstances it would be useless to continue my subscription [...] Unfortunately, the choice of reading matter for citizens of the Polish People's Republic is decided at the top and not by the individual citizen. I am permitted to learn about the activities of the [Kultura] Literary Institute in Paris only through the good offices of Witold Filler and other hacks of that ilk. There is just one consolation: although for several years I have not discontinued subscribing to and reading *Kultura*, I have not yet been burned at the stake." <sup>131</sup>

Despite the virtual demise of the liberalization of the Prague Spring of 1968, Czechoslovak censors still appeared to be exercising their powers very perfunctorily. No books were returned, and only one correspondent complained of not receiving Régis Debray's *Revolution* mailed to him. Political and controversial books that were safely delivered included Djilas's *The New Class*, works by Hans Kohn, L. W. Pye,

<sup>130</sup> George C. Minden, Director PSPD, Memorandum to the President, Free Europe, Inc., Highlights Report March–April 1969, dated May 12, 1969, 4.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid. Witold Filler (1931–2009) was a Warsaw writer, journalist, and publicist, and an active member of the communist (PUWP) party.



Richard Kostelanetz, Giles Radice, G. Fischer, and Zdeněk Němeček's *Tvrdá země* (Rough country).<sup>132</sup>

Responses from Hungary remained at a satisfactory level and PSPD assumed that the censors were still behaving rather leniently. The one change evident was an increase in the number of spontaneous requests for Hungarian books published in the West. There were 55 requests for Gaëtan Picon's *Korunk szellemi körképe* as compared with 29 in the first two months of 1969, and more requests than before for Teilhard de Chardin's *Az emberi jelenség* (*Le phénomène humain*) and Sándor Márai's *Napló 1945–1957*. At least half a dozen spontaneous requests for *Korunk szellemi körképe* (five from Cluj/Kolozsvár in Transylvania and one from Bucharest) were sent by ethnic Hungarians in Romania, presumably a reflection of Bucharest's more flexible foreign policies. Several requests for Picon's book were also received from Magyars in Slovakia, and a number of those sent were acknowledged.<sup>133</sup>

The Romanian censors were, according to Minden, "pulling in their punches." A great many controversial titles got through and no books at all were returned. Some of the titles acknowledged were Léon Trotsky's *Histoire de la révolution russe* (History of the Russian Revolution), sent to Prime Minister Ion Gheorghe Maurer, Bernard Baylin's *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* received by Deputy Education Minister Miron Constantinescu, *The Origins of American Politics* by the same author, Karl W. Deutsch's *International Political Communities*, Leo Labedz's *On Trial*, and Daniel Bell's *Marxian Socialism in the United States*—a total of eight political books received by 19 recipients.<sup>134</sup> In the wake of the 1968 events in Czechoslovakia and the attempts of the Sofia regime to prove itself more orthodox than Moscow, censorship tightened in Bulgaria in early 1969. A letter sent from Paris on April 20, 1969, by a Western visitor, reported: "All employees in television and radio who are not party members have been fired from their jobs. Some writers and journalists have lost their jobs, and been sent to forced-labor camps."<sup>135</sup>

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 17. All these books had been published with PSPD assistance.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 23–4.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

Polish censorship of incoming mail continued to be erratic and unpredictable in May and June 1969. Out of 50 copies of Pierre de Boisdeffre's *Une histoire de la littérature d'aujourd'hui* (A history of contemporary literature), 22 were confiscated, the receipt of six was acknowledged by the addressees, the delivery of five more was confirmed by checking with the postal authorities, and the remainder remained unaccounted for. A professor of English at the University of Łódź acknowledged receipt of a number of books, and wrote: "In one of the latest packages there had been a book (or books) which the customs office held back in accordance with censorship regulations, sending us information on how to appeal the decision. Since the books had not been [formally] ordered, we shall not follow this up." A Szczecin economist who received books sent to him reported that *The Penguin Encyclopedia* had been "confiscated by the customs-house in Warsaw as prohibited in Poland." He forwarded the official notice of confiscation he had received from the main post office in Warsaw.<sup>136</sup>

The Czechoslovak censors still seemed to take a lenient attitude toward sensitive political material mailed into the country, and there was no indication that mailed material was not reaching its destination. Controversial titles sent included Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *First Circle*, Robert Marcuse's *Kultur und Gesellschaft* (Culture and society), and Arthur Schlesinger's *The Politics of Upheaval*. A lady in Prague wrote to a London sponsor that it probably knew why some acknowledgements of receipt "can be sent off only with considerable interval of time in-between."<sup>137</sup> There were no signs of any tightening of Hungary's rather relaxed censorship in May and June 1969. 91 acknowledgements and 21 requests for Picon's *Korunk szellemi körképe* were received. 100 copies of the Hungarian translation of Teilhard de Chardin's *Le phénomène humain* were sent out from Vienna, and 45 confirmations of receipt had been received.<sup>138</sup>

There was no perceptible sign of any Romanian censorship of incoming mail. Minden made an effort to get political titles through to magazines, which otherwise had to rely on communist sources for their information about current affairs. Acknowledgements for

<sup>136</sup> Highlights Report May-June 1969, dated July 11, 1969, 4-5.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 10-11.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 15.

books on politics and copies of the U.S. quarterly *Foreign Affairs* were received from two editors of *Lupta de clasă*, the theoretical organ of the Romanian party's Central Committee, the editors of *Lumea* in Bucharest, *Cronica* in Iași, *Astra* in Brașov, and *Magazin historic* in Bucharest. The last three agreed to continue receiving further issues of *Foreign Affairs*. Censors at the Bucharest book exhibition held in June 1969 objected to 29 titles published by Europa Verlag.<sup>139</sup>

Despite the apparent relaxation at the time of the Sofia Book Fair in October 1968, censorship became increasingly stringent in the wake of the Czechoslovak events of August 1968. Apart from libraries and the top echelons of party and government, few private persons were in contact with the sponsors. Most of them channeled their requests and acknowledgements through their offices and universities. Former foreign minister (1944–1946) and non-communist member of the Fatherland Front, Petko Staynov, received the letter announcing the mailing of the book *Les monuments de Paris* (Monuments of Paris), and he wrote back: “Unfortunately, the announced book did not reach me. This surprised me because I regularly received books from abroad.” A lecturer in English at the University of Varna who had received books in the past and had asked for three textbooks, wrote to IBF in London: “In case you would kindly comply with my urgent request, I would like to ask most kindly to send the books by registered post, otherwise they might not reach me.” A linguist also wrote to IBF, saying that books she had asked for on March 8 had still not arrived. “I asked in the post office some information about the arrival of books for me, but there was nothing for me [...] If you kindly send me the books it would be better to send them as a registered delivery in order to have the possibility in case of eventual non-delivery to make some demarches.”<sup>140</sup>

Although acknowledgments of receipt for highly political books (such as Kissinger's *American Foreign Policy*) continued to arrive from Czechoslovakia, there were signs of a tightening of censorship in the summer of 1969. A Prague student wrote: “Bochenski's *Contemporary*

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 20–1. To his Report sent to the Free Europe President, Minden attached the book exhibit catalogue with the titles struck out by the censors marked in red. No copy of the catalogue was found in the George Minden Collection.

<sup>140</sup> All quotes from *ibid.*, 23.

*Philosophy* has been confiscated as ‘obnoxious.’ But luckily I have received it from a friend.” A Prague economist who had requested *The Black Book* by the Institute of History of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, published in the U.S. by Praeger, wrote after two months: “The book you sent me did not arrive. If registered, please claim it.”<sup>141</sup> On August 26, Reuters reported from Prague that the censor’s office had five days earlier banned the distribution of U.S., British, French, and West German newspapers, and it was not known how long the order would remain in force.

2,651 letters arrived in August 1969 from Hungary, the highest monthly total since 1964. After the slowdown that followed the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, the incoming mail seemed to indicate that the disquiet felt then had subsided. Hungarian recipients continued to welcome books from the West, either mailed from Britain, France, the U.S., or West Germany. The censors seemed to be lenient, and even controversial works by émigré writers were delivered with no perceptible difficulty. Confirmations of receipt arrived for László Mécs’s poetry anthology, Tamás Tűz’s poetry anthology *Elraboltam Európát* (I abducted Europe), Domokos Gyallay’s *Erdélyi legendák* (Transylvanian legends), Teilhard de Chardin’s *Az emberi jelenség*, and Picon’s *Korunk szellemi körképe*.<sup>142</sup>

The large number of confirmations of the receipt of political books from Romania indicated that postal censors were paying little attention to controversial titles. While many confirmations came from officials and institutions, they also started to arrive from individuals, “something that was out of the question in the fairly recent past,” as Minden noted. The more challenging political titles that got through included works by Otto von Habsburg (*Europa—Grossmacht oder Schlachtfeld*) (Europe—Great power or battlefield), Leszek Kołakowski (*Toward a Marxist Humanism*), H. B. Acton (*What Marx Really Said*), Richard Löwenthal (*Ist den Osten noch ein Block?*) (Is the East still a bloc?), Nicholas Lobkowitz (*Marx and the Western World*), Ithiel de Sola Pool (the editor of *Contemporary Political Science*), etc.<sup>143</sup>

<sup>141</sup> Highlights Report July–August 1969, dated September 16, 1969, 8.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 21.

An exhibition of German books published by Europa Verlag in Vienna and organized by the Jungbrunnen bookstore was held in Bucharest and attracted some 6,000 visitors. They included writers, journalists, teachers, and students mostly from the Bucharest area, but some 10% came from the provinces. All of Europa's books in print in 1969 were on display, with the exception of 29 titles rejected by the Romanian censors. The majority dealt with politics and sociology, with a few books on philosophy, history, literature, and travel. A total of 622 request forms were filled by those who wanted some of the books on display. The most requested titles included Walter Hacker's *Theresienstadt*, David Horowitz's *Anatomie unserer Zeit* (Anatomy of our time), Herbert Marcuse's *Psychoanalyse und Politik*, and two books by Adam Schaff, *Sprache und Erkenntnis* (Language and perception) and *Marxismus und der menschlicher Individuum* (Marxism and the human individual).<sup>144</sup> For some unexplained reason, the Bulgarian postal censors clamped down on mailings by three French sponsors with Polish affiliations. During July and August 1969, more than 50 books mailed from Paris by Galerie Lambert, Libella, and the Librairie Polonaise were seized.<sup>145</sup>

In September 1969, the Polish censors kept a sharp eye on incoming mail and there was evidence that they had confiscated some books. Two correspondents reported the seizure of *The Encyclopedia of Modern History*. A Warsaw sociologist at the Polish Academy of Sciences wrote that the book had been "temporarily stopped in the post customs office for further consideration. It is not a big problem because, working professionally in [the] social sciences, I am entitled to any book I need."<sup>146</sup> A professor of English in Wrocław wrote: "I am writing to the Customs Office asking them to reconsider their decision or else return the confiscated books to the senders. In the latter case, I would appreciate it if I could receive instead one of the remaining two items which I had listed on my book request." A student in Rybnik wrote: "The parcel was almost four months on its way from London. I

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 22. The report does not list the 29 titles found objectionable by the Romanian censors.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>146</sup> Highlights Report September 1969, dated October 6, 1969. For this and the next two quotations, 4.

suppose they stopped this parcel in Warsaw and this is why I received it three days ago, on the 28<sup>th</sup> of this month. The inside part of the paper sack was torn: they must have poked their noses there, but at least I received all three precious gems.”

Polish correspondents may have been daunted by the censors, but this did not diminish their interest and determination to continue to receive books. A writer in Warsaw waited to acknowledge the receipt of a book on literary criticism until he went on a visit to Paris. He wrote that for personal and family reasons, he did not want to write from Warsaw. “I doubt that the I.A.C. is an institution that our authorities regard too favorably [...] I would be grateful, however, if this contact between us could be continued. So I would appreciate it if you could continue sending me books indirectly, through a friend of mine who will be informed by me in New York about the packages I have received and will pass this information to you.”<sup>147</sup>

A book distributor who gave books to Poles visiting their relatives in the industrial north of France, reported the following episode to one of PSPD’s Polish émigré representatives in France: “One of my friends who visits Poland frequently pays off his customs inspectors with books that I give him. This year he was examined by a woman inspector and instead of a book he gave her a five-dollar bill folded in his passport. Of course, she accepted the dollars, but a few minutes before he left after all the formalities were over, one of his ‘friends’ from the Customs Office came over and said: ‘I sent that woman to inspect you on purpose because she wanted something to read, too, and then you go and grease her palm with dollars. You are lucky I recognized you from a distance and that she is from the same unit as us, because otherwise you’d be in quite a mess.’ Times are getting tough and two or three books are always worth the price of a couple of weeks on the beach!”<sup>148</sup>

Censorship in Czechoslovakia continued to have no noticeable impact on book mailings, and even books of a political or controversial character were still being acknowledged. Nevertheless, one field representative in Rome quoted a visiting historian on a study grant, saying

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 4. At the end of his letter, he asked for 13 books.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 5. Depending on the mood of individual customs officers, this method was probably used by other East European visitors returning home with Western books in their luggage.

that Prague's post office No. 120, where packages containing printed matter from the West were examined by censors, "is in full operation." Despite their current political circumstances, Czechs and Slovaks still wrote openly to the émigré publication *Svědectví*, which was high on the censors' blacklist and was often attacked in the communist press. A request for a subscription from North Bohemia advised: "When you send me a copy, please inform me in a separate letter; it is uncertain that I shall receive it [for] the package may be seized." Another requester wrote: "For safety reasons, please use my official address if possible."<sup>149</sup>

Romanian postal censors appeared to be continuing their lenient approach, and even the more controversial titles mailed were acknowledged by the addressees. The disappearance of one copy of *The History of the USA* from a book parcel sent to Cluj was probably due to pilferage rather than to a single overzealous postal inspector. The Bulgarian mail censors definitely worked with a blacklist, which from time to time affected mailings. Nevertheless, most of what was sent to libraries and institutions, approved economists and scientists, and certain professional and teaching people went through.<sup>150</sup>

Throughout October 1969, Poland's vigilant postal censors continued to keep a sharp eye on mail coming in from abroad, and even official institutions encountered some difficulties. That the censors were stricter than in the past was shown by the fate of several mailings of controversial books. The Polish translation of Gaëtan Picon's *Panorama des idées contemporaines* had been scheduled several times in the past and was generally delivered without problems. When it was scheduled again, only a small proportion of acknowledgements were received. Follow-up letters of inquiry showed that a number of addressees had not received the book. A similar fate befell a scheduled mailing of the Polish translation of Arnold Barach's *The USA and its Economic Future*.<sup>151</sup>

New travel restrictions came into force in October 1969 in Czechoslovakia, but there was no evidence of any changes in postal censorship, which still appeared to be rather lenient. Even books of a

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., all quotations from page 9.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 19 on Romania and 21 on Bulgaria.

<sup>151</sup> October [1969] Highlights, dated November 7, 1969, 4.



political nature continued to be acknowledged.<sup>152</sup> Only one title was stopped by the Hungarian postal censorship in October 1969, *Új égtájak* (New horizons), an émigré poetry anthology edited by György Gömöri and Vilmos Juhász. Of 50 copies mailed, 37 were returned by the postal authorities marked “non-admis.” This action was taken despite the generally favorable review of the book by István Vas published in the literary supplement of the party daily *Népszabadság*.<sup>153</sup>

There was no indication of any change in Romania’s relatively relaxed postal censorship. One unusual phenomenon was that post-cards to confirm the receipt of books did not reach their addressees. When French sponsors sent follow-up letters inquiring whether the books they sent had been received, several recipients replied with assurances that they had mailed back their confirmation of receipt. Such incidents occurred not only in Bucharest but also in provincial cities like Galați and Constanța. Bulgarian postal censors continued to keep a sharp eye on incoming mail and appeared to have stopped some parcels. A pediatrician in Plovdiv complained that he had not received a particular issue of *Galerie des Arts*, and another physician wrote: “I understood from your letter that you have already sent the books I had asked for last year. I am sorry, however, to inform you that for one reason or another the books have not reached me [...] It would be advisable if you would inform me in a letter about the date you sent me the registered parcel and its registration number.” Even former foreign minister Petko Staynov was not immune, as shown by his letter to a Paris sponsor: “I regret to tell you that I did not receive the registered package No. 0307—the free copies of *Histoire de la littérature française* and *Anthologie de la poésie polonaise* [edited by Constantin Jelenski]. I regret this all the more because these two books, especially the first one, interest me immensely.”<sup>154</sup>

Poland’s censors kept a sharp eye on incoming mail in November 1969, extracting rather arbitrarily from it those publications they deemed offensive. Both the Institute of Labor, Poland’s most impor-

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 14. William (Vilmos) Juhász was Minden’s Hungarian national plan advisor from 1960 until his retirement and death in 1967. György Gömöri was a Hungarian book carrier and distributor in Cambridge, England.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 19 on Romania and 22 on Bulgaria.



tant institution for the study of labor problems, and the Higher School of Rural Economy in Warsaw wrote in November to Libella in Paris that they had not received copies of *L'an 2000* (The year 2000) by Herman Kahn and A. J. Wiener. An addressee in Katowice wrote to the International Book Fellowship in London that Erich Fromm's *The Sane Society* "was confiscated by the Polish Custom-duty Office in Warsaw." On the other hand, as evidence of the censors' unpredictability, a lady in Kraków acknowledged the receipt of Gaëtan Picon's *Panorama myśli współczesnej*, a book that previously had been particularly disliked by the censors.<sup>155</sup> There were still no signs of a serious tightening of censorship in Czechoslovakia, but letters were taking longer than usual to be delivered—a possible indication that incoming mail was being more closely scrutinized. Some correspondents became more cautious. A historian at the Institute of Eastern Europe of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, who was receiving *Kultura* from the Institut Littéraire in Paris, asked that no more copies be sent to him "until the situation becomes clear." A Prague student, who hoped to visit England in the fall of 1970, wrote: "I am interested in political books, too, but I think it's better to choose them in England myself personally."<sup>156</sup>

No special problems with Hungarian censors were reported during November, but one bottleneck was relieved through a rarely reported case of official intervention. Several visitors who received books in New York and asked to have them mailed to them complained after their return to Hungary that they had not yet received their books. One New York sponsor was visited by a Hungarian of some position in the party hierarchy, who also wanted books mailed to him. When the sponsor mentioned the holdup that had been reported to him, his visitor promised to look into the matter upon his return to Budapest. Back in Hungary, he wrote to New York that all book parcels were now channeled through a specific Budapest post office, where their contents were controlled—a process that could delay mail for weeks. Nevertheless, within a short period of time, acknowledgements of receipt came in from some 15 institutions and individuals to which

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 11.

in the course of six months our sponsor had mailed about 400 books, none of which had been delivered until then. Book distributors noted that almost all book recipients who wanted books to be mailed to them asked that they be sent to their work addresses rather than to their private addresses, in order to avoid any unpleasant consequences by having the books addressed to them in person.<sup>157</sup> There was little evidence of interference with incoming mailings by the Romanian censors. An exception was reported by a correspondent in Buzău, who inquired after books he had not received at the Central Customs Office in Bucharest. He was told that Franklin Escher's *Brief History of the U.S.* and Allan W. Palmers's *Dictionary of Modern History 1789–1945* were not permitted to be imported into Romania. Both titles had been mailed many times before and had seldom been stopped. Bulgarian censorship continued to be tight, without any visible change in sight.<sup>158</sup>

Polish censors were as quick as ever to stop any books they deemed provocative or exceptionable. After 50 copies of Pierre de Boisdeffre's seemingly uncontroversial *Métamorphose de la littérature* (The metamorphosis of literature) had been sent from Paris to Poland by registered mail, the French postal authorities informed PSPD's sponsor in December that only seven copies had been delivered and 25 had been confiscated. A teacher in Wrocław reported that a copy of the *Larousse Encyclopedia of Modern History*, edited by Marcel Dunan, had been seized, adding: "I also heard from the Polish customs authorities that the loss of the book was final and irrevocable." Other titles probably stopped by the censors were a copy of *Traktat Brzeski a Polska* (The Brest-Litovsk Treaty and Poland) by S. W. Wojstowski, mailed to the Kórnik Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences (near Poznań), which told the sponsor that the books should be considered "lost," and an issue of *Teki Historyczne*, which according to the Kraków addressee had not reached him and must have been "lost."<sup>159</sup>

Czechoslovak censorship seemed to become stricter at the end of 1969, even though acknowledgements for political books were still arriving. A historian at the Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences probably had the censor in mind when he asked that the

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 21 on Romania and 23 on Bulgaria.

<sup>159</sup> Highlights Report December 1969, dated January 7, 1970, 4, *ibid.*

books he requested be mailed to Vienna. Similarly, a student of chemistry in Prague, who asked for five English novels, wrote: "In case you will be so kind and will send me these books, write me about it before you will send the books and if it will be possible send the books in a registered parcel. Our customers [customs officers] and all [customs] offices are very busy and active now!"<sup>160</sup> No special problems were noticeable in Hungary, except for the complete lack of confirmation of receipt for Picon's *Korunk szellemi körképe* since PSPD stopped sending it by registered mail as an economical measure. This particular case could be attributable to the Hungarian censors. No unusual censorship activities were noted in Romania and no changes in Bulgarian censorship were observed during December 1969.<sup>161</sup>

Starting with 1970, Minden's extremely detailed semi-annual reports covered every possible aspect of the book project. Their references to censorship were valuable but became somewhat less specific than in his monthly and bi-monthly Highlights Reports of the 1960s. In the first two months of the year, Poland's unpredictable and capricious censors kept a close eye on incoming mail from the West. While many political and controversial books reached their destination, from time to time some copies of the same books were seized. Four reports of confiscation were received. A correspondent in Łódź received three books, but not a fourth sent to him, *Broken Mirror* by Pawel Majewski.<sup>162</sup> He wrote: "The fourth book was taken by the customs; I received a note that its 'distribution in national territory is forbidden.' No comment." Single copies of *From Sarajevo to Potsdam* by A. J. P. Taylor, *Frustration and Aggression* by John Dollard, *English Poetry* by Douglas Bush, and *Readings in the Philosophy of Social Sciences*, edited by May Brodbeck, were confiscated.

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 10–11.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 15 on Hungary, 20 on Romania, and 23 on Bulgaria.

<sup>162</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1970, dated March 10, 1970, 4. This is the last bi-monthly Highlights Report available in the Minden Collection of the Hoover Institution Archives, along with Statistical Report No. 164 for January–February 1970, 80 pages, and No. 165 for July–August 1970, 116 pages. As shown by preserved Romanian documents, bi-monthly reports continued to be prepared in the first half of the 1970s.

There was no apparent tightening of censorship in Czechoslovakia. Politically sensitive books such as Isaac Deutscher's *Unfinished Revolution* were still being delivered through the mailings, and correspondents continued to include with their acknowledgements notes saying that they were interested in such subjects as politics, philosophy, and religion. A rather unique case was that of the book *The Question of God* by Heinz Zahrnt, sent to a minister of the Czech Brethren in Nymburk, Central Bohemia. The postal authorities safely forwarded it to him to Bern, where, he wrote, he had settled after he defected in 1968.<sup>163</sup> While there was no perceptible change in Romania's relatively benign censorship, Bulgaria's postal censorship remained tight and all printed matter mailed from abroad was subject to close scrutiny. Only titles deemed politically harmless and addressed to approved institutions and the political elite could be expected to pass the scrutiny of the censors. Bulgarians themselves were well aware of this, as a candid letter from a professor, describing one way in which book recipients sought to circumvent the censors' attention, made abundantly clear. He asked books to be sent alternatively to two different addresses: that of his own institute, and that of the National Library. In the latter, a relative of his was employed and could retrieve the books with the professor's name on it.<sup>164</sup>

In his report for the first half of 1970, Minden wrote: "We have reliable evidence that 79,434 of the 110,977 books and periodicals we distributed were received," and that most of the remainder probably got through. Many recipients did not acknowledge books received "out of laxness or caution," and said so during their visits to the West. Some sponsors also failed to forward all the acknowledgements they received. In one case, because of a misunderstanding on the part of its staff, one of the major American sponsors threw away all acknowledgements of receipts mailed to it over a 12-month period. Minden also had "circumstantial evidence" that a number of books confiscated or stolen found their way to second-hand shops or the black market, "rather than molder in censors' pigeonholes."<sup>165</sup> Because mailed books had

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 10–11.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>165</sup> George C. Minden, Semi-Annual Report Calendar Year 1970 (First Half), Free Europe, Inc., Press and Special Projects Division, 5, *ibid.*

to go through censorship, most books about politics and international affairs were distributed person-to-person to East European visitors to the West. In the first half of the year, 15,634 such books—38.1% of all person-to-person distribution—were given out.<sup>166</sup>

The report noted that a “gradual and cautious liberalization has been taking place in Hungary,” and that there was generally little interference with mailings from the West on the part of Hungarian censors, with controversial titles going through without difficulty. Even so, copies of *Roger Garaudy* by Serge Perottino, and *Speak Memory* by Vladimir Nabokov were returned to the sender.<sup>167</sup> In the case of Romania, very controversial titles mailed to party and government officials, newspapers, universities, libraries, and institutes of the Romanian Academy, as well as to privileged individuals, were delivered without interference. Unlike in the past, when they seldom got through, books in Hungarian sent to ethnic Magyars in Transylvania also reached the addressees.<sup>168</sup> Because of the strict Bulgarian censorship, many Bulgarians channeled their requests through institutions, one third of them for political books. As a result, to avoid its books being stopped by the censors, PSPD’s mailings were dispatched to ministries, universities, libraries, and trading enterprises.<sup>169</sup>

Minden signed his overall report for the second half of 1970 as the new President of the International Advisory Council, Inc. The introductory section was basically a repetition of the general findings of the preceding report. IAC had to rely on publishers, who were its sponsors for most of its mailings, to forward to New York the acknowledgements they received, something they did not invariably do. There were also reports of books being sold over or under the counter by East European bookstores, and thus it could be assumed that some confis-

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 11. This is the last report Minden sent to the President of Free Europe, Inc. All subsequent semi-annual reports, signed George C. Minden, President, IAC (International Advisory Council), went to the CIA directly or through IAC’s former head Ethel Schroeder in New York.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 19. There was also a noticeable trend to review and quote historical, literary, and even religious books published in the West, and some émigré works had been made officially available.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 22–3. Bulgarian visitors to the West were also ready to take more political books than any other nationality.

cated or stolen books ended up in second-hand shops or on the black market.<sup>170</sup>

Polish institutions remained relatively free from censorship and asked for many highly political books that usually got through, while individuals were more cautious about what they requested. They were also less strict than institutions about acknowledging what they received. Because direct distribution to Polish visitors to the West allowed IAC to give out highly political books without fear of them being seized by postal censors, some 45% of the more than 18,000 books distributed in this manner, many of them in Polish, concerned politics and international affairs.<sup>171</sup> In Czechoslovakia, despite the repressive character of the “normalization” process under party secretary general Gustáv Husák, Minden felt that Czechs and Slovaks were “less circumspect in their requests for books than, say, Poles.” Close to 23% of the books requested and 64% of the books given out to visitors to the West were directly political.<sup>172</sup> According to a Czech expert, the post-1970 Husák regime meant the restoration of an authoritarian regime, which was “openly aggressive” and “ideologically extremist.” With the disappearance of “writers and journalists who would want to bypass censorship,” preliminary censorship was replaced by self-censorship. “The sacked 1968 reformers were almost totally isolated from society, which had suddenly become extremely conformist and docile.”<sup>173</sup>

Because postal censorship was less of a problem in Hungary, the bulk of the requests received from there came from individuals and just below 3% from institutions—just the reverse of the situation in the other

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<sup>170</sup> George C. Minden, President, IAC Semi-Annual Report for Book Distribution July 1 to December 1970, undated, 3. Scheduled books mailings to Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were stopped by the end of 1970. *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 12. Genuine liberty of the press occurred briefly in Poland only in 1980–1981, when the Solidarity labor union was allowed to operate publicly.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>173</sup> Jan Čulík, “There was no Censorship in Czechoslovakia in the 1970s and 1980s,” paper presented at University College, London, April 25, 2008. Through police coercion of the dissidents and the command economy still in place, the prevailing ideology and economic dependency could be preserved.

target countries. Even so, far more provocative books and newspapers, many of them highly provocative émigré publications, were distributed person-to-person to visitors to the West.<sup>174</sup> In the case of Romania, the book program reached the top strata of government and academia more consistently than in any other target country, and all books about politics and international affairs, as well as books of a general political character, were delivered to the addressees. Throughout 1970, acknowledgements of receipt for Hungarian émigré works, a rare occurrence in the past, were received from Magyars in Transylvania. By contrast, Transylvania's Saxons who received books from the West had always been responsive in acknowledging their receipt.<sup>175</sup> Bulgarians remained very cautious about their contacts with the West, and many of them asked that books be forwarded to them through their workplace. As a result, some 43% of all requests came from institutions, the second highest proportion in all target countries after Poland. On the other hand, Bulgarian visitors to the West were less timid in their choice of books, and some 60% of the literature they took with them had a general political content.<sup>176</sup>

In his report for the first half of 1971, Minden emphasized the major advantages of the person-to-person distribution method over other methods of book distribution. It delivered the books and periodicals directly into the hands of the recipients, in this case the East European visitors and tourists to the West. Because no intermediary was involved, IAC was able to hand out large quantities of controversial books of a political nature that would have been stopped and confiscated by the postal censors, albeit with one potential hurdle remaining, that of border customs controls. Of the more than 21,000 books given out to visitors from Poland in the first half of the year, 65.7% were of a political character.<sup>177</sup> For the same reason, IAC

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 17–18. Such Hungarian émigré works included *Római muzsika* [Roman music] by László Cs. Szabó, *Szabó Dezső* [Dezső Szabó] by Gyula Gombos, and copies of *Korunk szellemi körképe*, the Hungarian translation of Gaëtan Picon's *Panorama des idées contemporaines*.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 18–19.

<sup>177</sup> George C. Minden, President, IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution January 1 to June 30, 1971, 13. For the same reason, IAC increased its person-to-person distribution program to Czechoslovakia by 40% as compared to the previous six-month period. Ibid., 14.



increased its Czechoslovak person-to-person distribution program by 40% as compared to the second half of 1970. During the same period, this method of distribution became the most important method of delivering books and periodicals, many of them in Hungarian and published in the West, to Hungarian visitors. Because Romanian authorities issued very few passports for travel to the West, especially private travel, this distribution method did not grow in 1971. Bulgarian censorship was still tighter than that of any of the other target countries. Therefore, relatively few requests were received, but many of those were political because they came from institutions or persons in positions of trust, exempt from the censors' vigilance.<sup>178</sup>

In his report for the second half of 1971, Minden again stressed that in his view, the person-to-person distribution "is the most advantageous means of distribution because the most highly political books are delivered into the hands of their recipients without having to run the gauntlet of postal censorship."<sup>179</sup> In the case of Poland, the political climate had visibly thawed since the riots and strikes in the winter of 1970, which resulted in the ouster of first party secretary Władysław Gomułka. Correspondents no longer feared having contacts with the West, and total distribution to Poland was nearly 25% higher than during the two preceding half-years. Books sent to institutions were less susceptible to postal censorship and reached a larger number of readers. At the same time, the person-to-person method remained essential because, Minden said, "It is the one method that enables highly controversial publications to be given to individuals without risk of the censors' intervention."<sup>180</sup>

The "normalization" process under way in Czechoslovakia under party leader Husák partly reestablished control—through police coercion—of the country's dissidents, and affected the book distribution in two ways. It restored a more vigilant censorship of book parcels mailed from the West, and consequently made many recipients more fearful.

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<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 14–15 on Czechoslovakia, 17 on Hungary, 19 on Romania, and 21 on Bulgaria.

<sup>179</sup> George C. Minden, President, IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution July 1 to December 31, 1971, undated, 6.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 13–14. Hand-to-hand distribution accounted for 60.3% of all books and periodicals delivered to Poland in the second half of 1972.



As a result, direct hand-to-hand distribution assumed a new importance. Minden noted: "To help keep person-to-person distribution up, greater use was made of Western visitors to Czechoslovakia and of travelers who would mail the books in from Hungary or the German Democratic Republic by those less tightly controlled postal routes."<sup>181</sup>

The report was unhappy about Bulgaria's very stringent postal censorship, which seemed to become even tighter. As a result, person-to-person distribution became an even more important distribution method, accounting for half of the Bulgarian distribution in the first half of 1971 and 60% in the second half of 1971. On the other hand, half of all books and periodicals mailed to Bulgaria were manifestly political, and nearly 12% were books about politics and international affairs. Minden explained: "One reason why it is possible to send such a high proportion of political titles to such a closely controlled country is that one copy of almost every title is mailed to the national academy, and leading university libraries, not only because they were more responsive than individuals, but also because if no copies are addressed to them, the censors will often simply reroute to them copies addressed to individuals."<sup>182</sup>

In the case of Romania, Minden noted: "Under Nicolae Ceaușescu, who is now head of state and secretary-general of the Rumanian [sic] Communist party, mailed books are allowed relatively free access to Rumania, but the Rumanians themselves are given very limited opportunities to travel to the West."<sup>183</sup> For this reason, person-to-person accounted for only 18.5% of total distribution to Romania. Thanks to the former PSPD/IAC Romanian national plans advisor,

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<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 15–16.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 22. For example, many books mailed to private persons during the first half of 1971 were received by the Cyril and Methodius Library in Sofia.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 19. At the end of 1971, 13 letters of complaint were received from individuals who waited in vain for a month for the books they were supposed to receive. Titles included works by Denis de Rougemont, Ted Sorensen's *Kennedy*, *Une histoire vivante de la littérature* [A living history of literature] by Pierre de Boisdeffre, and *Deutsche Geschichte* [German history]. Romanian Report for November–December 1971, 4. Courtesy of Ioana Alimanestianu. Throughout the book project, Minden used the terms "Rumania," "Rumanian," and "Rumanians." See footnote 10, Chapter 4.

who provided copies of various monthly Romanian Reports covering the period 1971–1974, it was possible to ascertain that Minden continued to prepare his usual bi-monthly Highlights Report, none of which were found in the Hoover Institution Archives, as well as his bi-monthly statistical reports, of which only a single copy for the period September–October 1971 turned up in the same archives.

During the first half of 1972, many letters of thanks from Eastern Europe were forwarded to IAC, and there were only very few cases of undelivered publications. According to Minden: “Many recipients are careless or cautious about responding; some books find their way into resale stores and may be filched in the mails. A negligible number was known to have been confiscated or returned as inadmissible.”<sup>184</sup> Institutions in Poland remained of particular value to the book program because they were relatively exempt from censorship. In the first half of 1972, 57% of all books acknowledged were received by universities, schools, and public libraries. This also accounted for the fact that 405 of the publications asked for during the same period were political—a ratio exceeded only in the case of Bulgaria, the sole target country where institutions played a greater role than in Poland.<sup>185</sup>

In 1972, all Czechoslovak public libraries were inspected on the basis of lists and purged of materials “critical of Marxism-Leninism, the policy of the socialist states, and of the Marxist-Leninist Parties,” as well as of revisionist and right-wing opportunist literature. All offensive titles were banned. The Prague University Library held a special collection of “*Libri Prohibiti*” for the works of Czech émigré publishers, which became accessible to the public only after 1969.<sup>186</sup> The

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<sup>184</sup> George C. Minden, President, IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, January 1 to June 30, 1972, 3.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>186</sup> Jan Culik, “There Was No Censorship in Czechoslovakia in the 1970s and 1980s,” 6. Censorship after 1968 was so petty that even many academic publications were suppressed. See also Karel Kaplan and Dušan Tomašek, *O cenzuře v Československu v letech 1945–1956* [About censorship in Czechoslovakia in the years 1945–1956] (Prague: Sešity Ústavu pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, 1994), 75. In the 1970s, the Interior Ministry abolished the reformist Union of Czech Writers and suppressed the work of some 400 Czech writers who had actively participated in the reforms of the Prague Spring of 1968. *Ibid.*, 55.

political atmosphere in Czechoslovakia continued to affect and depress the book distribution. Scheduled mailings and requests for books declined, and only 19.5% of the 15,308 books and periodicals mailed to Czechoslovakia during the first half of 1972 were acknowledged. The rate of acknowledgements had been on the decline since the beginning of 1970, an indication of the recipients' growing caution as the sense of personal freedom inspired by the Czechoslovak Spring of 1968 was gradually diminishing. As fewer and fewer exit visas were issued by the authorities, visiting Czechs and Slovaks also received fewer books.<sup>187</sup>

Bulgarian censors controlled its foreign mailings more than those in any other target country, but the relatively high political contents of mailings was possible because many of the recipients were national institutions, libraries, and universities. They were included in almost every multiple mailing because, if they were not, the Bulgarian authorities were liable to redirect to them packages addressed to individuals. This practice was brought to light in a number of instances when the Cyril and Methodius National Library acknowledged the receipt of a book never addressed to it. Because of the predominance of institutions and their relative immunity to censorship, 55% of all books requested in the first half of 1972 were political, far more than from any other target country. As before, because of tight censorship, institutions played a more dominant role in mailings than in any other target country, while inhibiting the responsiveness of individuals, except those enjoying the favors of the regime and in positions of privilege.<sup>188</sup>

Paradoxically, in the first half of 1972 Romania had the largest increase in total distribution of any target country and moved up to third place ahead of Czechoslovakia. Over 30,000 requests were mailed, the largest number since the peak year of 1969, while person-to-person distribution accounted for only 11% of total distribution. While the general report did not mention any evidence of censorship, which appeared to be minimal, several bi-monthly reports indicated that post office thieves remained active and that many books failed to reach their destination. During the first two months of the year, 51 letters of com-

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<sup>187</sup> George C. Minden, President, IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, January 1 to June 30, 1972, 14–16. There were 47% less visitors to the West than during the first half of 1971.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 21–2.

plaint were received, mostly addressed to Galerie Lambert and Libella in Paris, to Interpress Ltd. in London, and to American publishers. All these correspondents had received the letters announcing the book, but the book itself had failed to arrive. More such letters might have arrived if all the books had been announced in advance in a letter. However, this was not done for books mailed from the U.S., nor for those mailed by French publishers, and German and English sponsors.<sup>189</sup> In March and April 1972, books continued to disappear—lost in the mail or stolen. Galerie Lambert and Libella received 18 more letters from people who did not receive the announced book. Two letters complained of not having received the *Philosophisches Wörterbuch* (Philosophical dictionary). The review *Magazin Historic* asked for the first six volumes of *The Second World War* by Winston Churchill, which had been sent in two parcels, each containing three volumes.<sup>190</sup> A few more addressees reported that announced books were not delivered. According to the report, “The likelihood was that that they [the books] were filched in the mails rather than officially confiscated, especially in view of the fact that books mailed by IAC turned up from time to time in Romanian second-hand bookshops with their acknowledgement slips still inside them.”<sup>191</sup>

In the second half of 1972, some books mailed to Eastern Europe continued to be impounded by postal censors or stolen and sold, as shown by letters frequently received by IAC from people who had bought books in second-hand stores and found the accompanying acknowledgement slip still between the covers. In other instances, a number of recipients thanked for the books mailed to them only when they were able to visit the West. According to Minden, “There is little doubt [...] that the overwhelming majority of the books and periodicals distributed end up with the Eastern Europeans for whom they were intended.” This conclusion may explain why this particular semi-annual report contained, next to the usual abundance of statistical data, no concrete reference to censorship.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Undated Romanian bi-monthly report for January–February 1972, 7.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., March–April 1972, 1.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., May–June 1972, 27.

<sup>192</sup> George C. Minden, President, IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution July 1 to December 31, 1972, 3–4.

As in the past, individual acknowledgements from Bulgaria came only from persons in established, politically secure positions, and occasionally from teachers or students who received books uncontroversial enough not to offend Bulgaria's censors. Because a large proportion of the requests came from institutions and privileged persons, the ratio of political books among Bulgarian requests was very high, much higher than for any other target country—58.7% in the first half and 42.2% in the second half of 1972. For the same reason, a high proportion of the requests were filled, with a reasonable assurance that most of them, even highly political titles, would be delivered without confiscation because of the nature of the addressees. Those Bulgarians who were permitted to travel to the West were generally considered “politically safe” by the authorities, and sometimes even had prior permission to import whatever publications they wished.<sup>193</sup>

A considerable drop in the number of books requested by Romanian critics and writers was, according to Minden, “a reflection of the government’s recent drive to make literati hew closely to a proper Marxist-Leninist line. The editors of most of Rumania’s [sic] literary reviews have been replaced by politically more orthodox men, and all plays must be approved by new ideological committees before they may be produced. As a result, many literary men have drawn in their horns.”<sup>194</sup> As a result of this political pressure, nearly half of all books requested in the second half of 1972 were requested by teachers and students, with three-quarters of the requests for works on education, art, and language. While there was no proof of any books or periodicals being stopped by the censors, some correspondents complained of not having received them.<sup>195</sup>

The 83-page semi-annual report for the first seven months of 1973 is the last one available at the Hoover Institution Archives, but similar reports continued to be prepared in order to justify the usefulness of the book program and to ensure its continued financing. For econom-

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<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 30–2.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>195</sup> A sociology professor in Cluj did not receive *La crise de la sociologie* [The crisis of sociology] by Jean-Claude Bourdin and asked that the book be sent to his home address rather than to the magazine where he worked. Undated Romanian bi-monthly report for September–October 1972, 6, *ibid.*

ical reasons, the use of registered mail was curtailed in the second half of 1972, and then abandoned in all but exceptional cases. Despite fears to the contrary, this measure had little effect on the rate of acknowledgements of books sent through the mails. When registration was extensively used, tracers of non-deliveries revealed that only a few books a year had been seized by the regime authorities as inadmissible and not returned to the senders. "Many addressees are careless about acknowledging what they receive in the mail—and have admitted as much when they meet distributors while visiting the West. Many books find their way into Eastern European second-hand stores, sometimes with the acknowledgement slips still inside. Some publisher sponsors fail to forward acknowledgement slips, or forward them months and even years later. Nor is there any reason to believe that pilferage of the more attractive or valuable books does not take place."<sup>196</sup>

While the curtailment of registration did not have any perceptible effect on acknowledgements from Poland, there was a decrease in the proportion of acknowledgements of books mailed and of institutional acknowledgements received from Czechoslovakia. Minden wrote that this was due to "the fact that all book parcels have to be passed by the censors in one of two special post offices, one in Prague and one in Bratislava." He reported that "latterly one of two institutions have written diplomatically to sponsors to deter the mailing of unsolicited books. Various reasons have been adduced: that they have sufficient funds to order what they need so that others worse off may better appreciate such gifts, or that they are not equipped to handle gift books. Thus there have been indications that direct censorship is being backed by administrative pressures on some institutions to curb books that do not have official sanction."<sup>197</sup>

There were signs of a tightening of Hungarian censorship, which had until then been the most lenient of all the target countries. More books were returned to sponsors marked "non-admis," especially works on contemporary history, the United States, and East-West détente. A major sponsor in London suffered a drastic reduction in the volume of mail it received, and Minden speculated that it might

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<sup>196</sup> George C. Minden, IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, January 1 to July 31, 1973, 4.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 20–1. On Poland, 16.

have been blacklisted. A decline in the number of books acknowledged by writers and literary critics was also noticed. "This may be due to the fact that writers in particular have been under pressure recently to hew more closely to the party line and be on their guard against 'ideological subversion' from the West, and that several persons have been expelled from the party for deviation in their writings. This atmosphere of hightened [sic] vigilance may have inhibited the responsiveness of writers."<sup>198</sup>

Bulgarian censors were singled out again for closely inspecting incoming foreign mail and rejecting all publications to which they took exception. The report listed the only addressees to whom books were allowed to pass freely, namely such institutions as the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, the National Library and the University Library in Sofia, certain research establishments, and a handful of individuals with special permission or enjoying political trust. For the first time, two such individuals were named in the report: Nikolai Iribadzhakov, the editor of the Bulgarian Communist Party Central Committee's ideological monthly, and Ekaterina Kaneva, a "special researcher" at the Institute of Modern Social Theories under the direct supervision of the Presidium of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. "Mere mortals may receive only books of an utterly uncontroversial nature, such as language textbooks. The censors will freely divert books to addressees they deem more worthy than the stipulated recipient. Such tight supervision strongly inhibited contacts with the West and particularly acknowledgements of the receipt of books and periodicals from the West [...] Most of the individual requests are either for highly political books wanted by the specially privileged or for study aids wanted by teachers and students."<sup>199</sup> The high political content of the books Bulgarian visitors took was due in part to the fact that only the most trusted citizens were allowed to travel to the West, often in official capacities, and often with special permission to import whatever books they wished.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 26 and 29.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid., 36–7. The names of many more such trusted individuals appear on the list of the most prominent Bulgarians who acknowledged or requested Western books during the duration of the book distribution program.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., 39.

The sharp decrease since the first half of 1972 in the number of books requested by Romanian writers and critics “can be attributed to the Romanian [sic] Communist Party’s drive to keep Rumanian literature on the straight and narrow path of orthodoxy. For the last year Rumania’s men of letters have been far more cautious about contacts with the West than in the past.” Minden concluded: “The sharp drop in the number of Rumanian writers visiting the West also reflects the reduction in exit visas issued to them since the government’s crack-down on intellectual unorthodoxy.”

Thanks to a number of preserved bi-monthly reports on Romania, it is possible to follow the activities of this country’s censors during the second half of 1973 and during 1974. Similar reports on the other countries were not found, but they certainly exist. When German publishers decided to trace their books that did not get an acknowledgment of receipt, they found out that many people had not received them. The same happened with Galerie Lambert in Paris. IAC had no way of knowing if the books were stopped by the censors, had been lost in the mail, or had been stolen by post office employees. Titles included books on literature and no politically significant publications.<sup>201</sup>

In the next two months, 14 letters of complaint were received by German publishers and Galerie Lambert about books that were supposed to arrive but had not reached their destination. Out of 20 copies of a book in Hungarian, *Tudomány és Krisztus* (Science and Christ) by Teilhard de Chardin, sent from Rome, 15 were returned to the sender. Bishop Antal Jakab of the Episcopia Romano-Catolica in Alba Iulia acknowledged one book. The other four unreturned books were not acknowledged by the addressees, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, a Theology Institute in Sibiu, and two priests in Transylvania. The Hungarian magazine *Mérleg*, sent from Vienna, used to go through easily, but had “lately” been returned.<sup>202</sup> No evidence of censorship was found in the last two months of 1973, but Galerie Lambert and German publishers received about ten letters complaining of not

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<sup>201</sup> Romanian bi-monthly report for July–August 1973, undated, 8. Courtesy of Ioana Alimnesticu.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, September–October 1973, 7.



having received the book announced. These were the only sponsors who let Romanians know that they would receive a book.<sup>203</sup>

There was still no evidence of Romanian censorship in 1974, but the number of complaints increased, with 50 letters sent to Germany and France. The book *Die Heimsuchung des Europäischen Geistes* (The European mind in search of a home) by Klaus Mann was not received by nine out of 15 addressees, and some books were also returned to the U.S.<sup>204</sup> Many lost books of varied titles continued to be reported to Galerie Lambert and some German publishers, and complaints also reached André Mari, IAC's sponsor in Aix-en-Provence.<sup>205</sup> During the last quarter of the year, the same sponsors received many more letters reporting that the promised book had not arrived at its destination. The titles of the lost books ranged from literature to philosophy without any particular importance. The last paragraph of a letter by a high school teacher who received a book from a U.S. publisher ended with a somewhat cryptic remark: "A very important remark I would like to make: for safety's sake you should mail such free gifts with the special request to be returned to you if they cannot be delivered to the exact addressee, for various reasons."<sup>206</sup>

This concludes the authentic account, based on the mass of written evidence, available until 1973–1974, of the cat-and-mouse struggle between those who were trying to break through the ideological and cultural Iron Curtain of the Cold War, and those who were determined to stop them through the means of selective censorship or, sometimes, by looking the other way.

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<sup>203</sup> Ibid., November–December 1973, 9.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., March–April 1974, 7.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., May–June 1974, 9.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., October–December 1974, 8. Communist Romania abolished censorship in 1977 but retained its control of the press.

## CHAPTER 10

# The Communist Regimes on the Defensive

### *Criticisms, Warnings, and Attacks*

The communist regimes of Eastern Europe and their Soviet overseers could not fail to notice the steadily growing flow of Western literature reaching them from different points of origin in the U.S. and in Western Europe. Being well aware of the inherent threat these ideologically unwanted and unsuitable books and periodicals posed to their monolithic political control, they mostly resorted to censorship to intercept any book or magazine they considered “subversive.” The relevant party committees held regular meetings, sometimes at the highest level, to discuss the problem, and instructions were issued to post offices, libraries, and other institutions that received and handled Western literature. Books were confiscated and many of them ended up in the “restricted sections” of especially designated libraries. There were also plenty of criticisms and attacks in the party press on the part of regime ideologists and other defenders of Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy, with the Czechoslovak media being the most vocal. The book mailing program itself, however, was seldom explicitly mentioned.

A U.S. Department of State Intelligence Report from 1959 describes in great detail the speeches delivered at the twelfth plenum of the Polish communist party’s central committee, discussing various procedures toward regaining Party control in the field of culture and overcoming the existing confusion in the program of foreign exchanges and visits. There were calls for the creation of a higher cultural exchange agency, an ideological commission of the party’s central committee, and a central coordination committee headed by the minister of culture and art. Direct contacts with cultural figures

were also needed to cut off politically harmful publications and to win over Polish writers, as well as to regain ideological control of state-supported institutions in science and culture. The mailing of books to Poland and the distribution of Western and émigré literature were not mentioned at the plenum, which was in essence an admission of the Polish regime's failure to influence culture into the desired direction.<sup>1</sup>

After 1956, the "screening" of the printed materials mailed to Hungary was the task of the Information Office (IO), headed by the wife of the leader of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (HSWP), János Kádár, while the international traffic of travelers was overseen by the Interior Ministry and the Customs Office. The IO's press administration department selected publications from the incoming postal bags, returning to the sender those considered hostile, confiscating and shredding the rest, or recommending them to the heads of domestic political or scientific institutes for their "personal use." When Hungary's international isolation decreased after the mid-1960s, the workload of the relevant sections of the Hungarian post office increased considerably. The same applied to the Kultura Foreign Trade Enterprise in charge of administration following the IO's authorization to deliver the shipments. The manual selection of printed materials by postal employees was facilitated by the fact that most of the books mailed abroad or stopped by customs were re-routed to post office No. 72 in Budapest, although post offices Nos. 62, 70, and 78, are also mentioned in several documents. This fastidious and intricate labor rested on the constant cooperation of several ministries (domestic trade, foreign affairs, transportation and posts, internal affairs) and institutions (State Office for Church Affairs, the Post Office, the Institute for Cultural Relations, etc.). Religious publications sent from the West, many of them as gifts, were also screened by the State Office for Church Affairs with the help of the so-called pro-regime "peace priests." All these institutions had at their disposal

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<sup>1</sup> "Polish Party Calls for Revision of Cultural Administration," unclassified Intelligence Report No. 7938, February 2, 1959, 1–6. State Department, Office of Intelligence and Analysis, National Archives, College Park, MD. Some of the key speakers at the plenum, such as Adam Schaff and Henrik Jabłoński, were among those Poles who received a large number of books through Minden's distribution programs.

the current and constantly updated lists of the prohibited or restricted publications.<sup>2</sup>

Of special interest is a top-secret official Hungarian directive issued on September 21, 1959, by György Aczél, at the time first deputy minister of culture in the post-1956 government set up by János Kádár. The letter, entitled “hostile propaganda,” was addressed to all heads of the government’s main directorates and departments, as well as to all heads of the cultural departments of county councils and city councils with the legal status of county. According to Aczél, “Not too often but for a longer period of time, a number of our libraries and scientific and higher education institutes and some of their heads, are receiving through the postal route from various capitalist countries publications and press material serving as hostile political propaganda [...] These publications, even to a small extent, could disturb our peaceful building [of socialism]. For this reason, the heads and staff of central and faculty university libraries, county libraries, museums, and archives must turn over on the day of arrival those Hungarian or foreign language publications not ordered by them and not requested as exchange material to the ‘Restricted [Circulation] Department’ of the Széchényi National Library (OSZK), where, with the authorization of the competent [persons], they will be available for scientific and other justified purposes.” Aczél requested the submission by October 15, 1959, of a written report on the implementation of “my instructions.”<sup>3</sup>

Under the Kádár regime, Aczél became Hungary’s leading politician in the sphere of culture, over which he assumed quasi-full influence and control. As early as 1957, he devised the notorious guiding principle of the three T’s, “supported, tolerated, banned”—“támogatás, tűrés, tiltás” in Hungarian—which became general practice in the

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<sup>2</sup> Courtesy of Dr. Béla Révész, lecturer at the Department of Political Science at the József Attila University of Szeged, and researcher at the Open Society Archives (OSA) at the Central European University, Budapest. He is the author of numerous studies on the Hungarian secret services under the Kádár regime.

<sup>3</sup> MOL (Hungarian National Archives) XIX-1-4-aaa.0040/1959-1.sz. Readers could gain access to publications they needed for their work only with a special authorization allowing them to enter the “closed” section of the library and read the requested works there.

1960s and 1970s. He was a pragmatist within ideological bounds, had close personal ties to Kádár, and tried to be on friendly terms or strike individual bargains with Hungary's leading literati and intellectuals, such as, among others, Gyula Illyés, Zoltán Kodály, and György Lukács. In his capacity of cultural tsar, he was certainly fully aware and well informed about the book mailing program targeting Hungary.<sup>4</sup>

The following year, a letter sent by Culture Ministry department head Pál Szekeres to comrade Dr. Magda Jóboru, chief director of the National Széchényi Library, spelled out the ministry's position with regard to "the confidential handling of foreign press publications" when acquiring "Hungarika"—literature about Hungary—published abroad. When ordering such literature from Kultura, and "to avoid dissident literature [and] counterrevolutionary works to get into unauthorized hands," Szekeres suggested, the Library should indicate that the particular book required "special handling" and should be delivered directly to the address of the OSZK. This was to prevent the employees of Kultura and the Library Servicing Enterprise (AKV) to handle the book. Szekeres asked Jóboru to start talks with Kultura and to report the results to him by March 1, 1960. He also mentioned the need to consult and reach an agreement with the foreign ministry about what was required from the relevant diplomatic missions in the matter of the acquisition of "Hungarika" publications.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> György Aczél (1917–1991), born Henrik Appel, joined the Hungarian Communist Party in 1935, and was imprisoned for five years under party leader Mátyás Rákosi. In October 1956, together with János Kádár he became a founding member of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (HSWP), first as deputy minister (1958–1967), and then as minister of culture (1967–1971). A member of the party's Central, then Political Committee, his influence declined in the 1980s. For a biography, see Révész, *Aczél és korunk* (Aczél and our time). See also Judit Lőrincz, "The Role of Censorship and Secret Publications in the 1980s in Hungary," in *Könyvtári Figyelő*, No. 4 (1993): 581–6. The article discusses censorship in the 1960s and 1970s, and the opening to the public of the collection of the former "banned publications" department of the Széchényi National Library in Budapest, Hungary.

<sup>5</sup> Pál Szekeres to Dr. Magda Jóboru, February 5, 1960. OSZK IT 32-1960. Dr. Magda Jóboru (1918–1982), a teacher, joined the Communist Party in 1946, was deputy minister of education (1950–1958), head of OSZK (1958–1964), and Hungary's representative at UNESCO in Paris (1966–1968).

The creation of and the reasons for the OSZK's "restricted section" deserve a brief mention. Under Article 16 of January 20, 1945, signed by Hungary, the publication, import, and dissemination of current and other literary works could take place only with the agreement of the Allied High Command, ensuring unlimited freedom of action for the Soviet authorities. Starting in the summer of 1945, fascist, anti-Soviet, racist, and anti-democratic books and press publications were prohibited and systematically collected and destroyed, affecting all major libraries, including the library of Parliament and the Library of the Academy of Sciences. With the approval of the Soviet military authorities, and thanks to the delaying tactics of the Hungarian government and the library's management, the Széchenyi National Library alone was allowed to keep its collection of prohibited works as sources for future historiography. In April 1946, these works and press products were placed under political police supervision in a special "restricted section." The collection was taken away in July 1952 by the interior ministry's state protection authority (AVH), and then returned to the OSZK in October 1953 following the domestic political changes in Hungary.<sup>6</sup>

The Hungarian communist regime also authorized the publication of selected books by Western authors to be deposited in OSZK's "restricted section"—a practice presumably followed by other East European communist regimes. In a strictly confidential document, the agitprop department of the Hungarian Workers' Party Central Committee listed the publications it had already authorized for "closed circulation": Milovan Djilas's *The New Class*, 310 copies; H. A. Kissinger's *We Must Choose*, 200 copies; T. K. Finletter's *Foreign Policy of the USA*, 209 copies; J. P. Sartre's *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, 180 copies; and W. W. Rostow's *Stages of Economic Growth*, 200 copies. In 1964, it proposed the publication of the following works for "closed dissemination": D. F. Fleming's *The Cold War (1917–1960)*; Anthony

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<sup>6</sup> Szilvia Bánfi, "Library Documents in AVH Captivity. The Sketchy History of the Creation of the Restricted Publications Section of the National Széchenyi Library," in Monok, ed., *A könyvtárak és a hatalom* (Libraries and power), 22–9. For a list of Hungarian and foreign books pulped or put on the index, see Katsányi, "Indexek, könyvzúzdak, könytárosok" (Indexes, book pulping, librarians).

Eden's *Memoirs*; Churchill's *Memoirs*, Gustav Andreas Wetter's *Dialectical Materialism: History and System in the Soviet Union* (new edition); Edward Teller's *The Legacy of Hiroshima*; Ralph E. Lapp's *Kill and Overkill*; and Andrew Tully's *The Central Intelligence Agency*. A brief description figured under each book title.<sup>7</sup>

In Czechoslovakia, the Communist Party's weekly *Tvorba* and Radio Prague both attacked the contents of the Spring 1958 issue of the émigré quarterly *Svědectví*, published in Paris, as well as its publishers. *Život strany* (Party life), a monthly published by the Party's central committee, in its September 1958 issue of both its Czech and Slovak edition, carried an eight-column analysis of "The Offensive of Our Enemies on the Ideological Front." The article stated that "various printed matter is shipped into our country" to influence in particular "functionaries in the higher echelons of our Party, the labor unions, the State administration, and influential people in general." Among the "subversive printed matter" that was said to be "smuggled into Czechoslovakia," the magazine mentioned *The New Class* by Milovan Djilas and the émigré quarterly *Svědectví* published in New York, both of which had been mailed by FEP.<sup>8</sup> A year later, *Rudé právo* (Red law), the daily paper of the Communist Party's central committee, quoted a paragraph from the same émigré magazine *Svědectví* (Vol. II, No. 2), discussing the topic of "Marxist aesthetics." The paper noted that *Svědectví* had praised a Czech novel recently published in Prague that was critical of "our present-day life" and thus became "a document of despair" of life under communism.<sup>9</sup>

In a speech delivered at the third Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party, the Minister of Home Affairs, Władysław Wicha, spoke about "foreign literature" reaching Poland from abroad. For Minden, this could be taken as a reference to FEP's activities: "[...] efforts are being made to organize illegal revisionist organizations; calumnious lit-

<sup>7</sup> László Orbán, "Proposal of the HSWP CC Agitation and Propaganda Section on the Publications for Restricted Circulation in 1964," Budapest, October 23, 1963, MOL M-KS 288.f.22/63/41.ő.e.

<sup>8</sup> Free Europe Press, Summary of Responses to Mailing Operations, Report No. 23, September 1 to September 30, 1958, dated October 20, 1958, 1. Courtesy of John P. C. Matthews.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, Report No. 31, May 1 to May 31, 1959 (undated), 1.



erature is being smuggled in, and a great number of threatening letters sent in. The most varied channels and methods are being used for this aim [...].”<sup>10</sup>

The April 1, 1959 issue of *Népíjság*, a daily published in Eger, Hungary, contained an article entitled “Thoughts on an Exile Periodical” by Dezső Pataky. It was a vicious attack on the September–October 1958 issue of *Új Látóhatár*, an émigré political and cultural journal published in Munich, directed against both the paper and its staff. It devoted special attention to an article by Imre Kovács on the populist writers, and to one by Gyula Borbándi on the philosophy and writings of György Lukács, the prominent Marxist philosopher. The attack called to mind the pre-October 1956 practice of Hungarian journalists who, while viciously attacking *Új Látóhatár*, gave a comprehensive review of the periodical itself, thus calling readers’ attention to the existence and contents of this literary journal.<sup>11</sup>

A flurry of criticisms in the Polish party press showed the impact of the Western political and economic books mailed to Poland by Minden’s PSPD. The Polish regime daily *Życie Warszawy* (Warsaw life), in its issue of July 16, 1963, criticized as “subversive literature” the magazine *Survey*, edited by Leopold Labedz, and *Philosophy and Ideology* by Zbigniew Jordan, both of which had been mailed by PSPD.<sup>12</sup> A lengthy critique by the Polish party ideologist Ludwik Krasucki appeared in the August 30, 1963 issue of *Trybuna Ludu* (Tribune of the people), attacking *One History of Europe*, a Council of Europe publication by Eduard Bruley and E. H. Dance, mailed in French and German to Poland. Krasucki began his review with a scathing reference to the Free Europe Committee, saying that the true nature of its “objective reporting” was well known, and that the book

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., Report No. 29, March 1 to March 31, 1959, dated April 17, 1959, 1. Władysław Wicha (1904–1984) was a member of the PUWP Central Committee from 1959 to 1968.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., Report No. 30, April 1 to April 30, 1959, undated, 1. Imre Kovács was the former head of the post-World War II Hungarian Peasant Party, had to flee Hungary, and worked for the Free Europe Committee in New York. Gyula Borbándi (1919–) was a Hungarian staff member of Radio Free Europe in Munich and one of the editors of *Új Látóhatár*.

<sup>12</sup> George C. Minden to The President [FEC], August [1963] Highlights, dated September 6, 1963, 1–2.



suffered from the same “subversive objectivity.” Minden noted: “There is no reference to the mailing program, and no clue as to whether the reference to FEC was more than coincidental.”<sup>13</sup> A book written by a recipient of the mailing program, Dr. Stefan Kurowski, a non-communist economist and researcher at the Institute of Economic Sciences, entitled *The Historical Process of Economic Growth*, caused a storm of criticism in Polish party circles and at least two attacks in party journals. One of his critics, writing in the theoretical party journal *Nowo Drogi*, accused Kurowski of being a disciple of the American economist Walt W. Rostow and of borrowing from the latter’s book *The Stages of Economic Growth*. Rostow’s book had been mailed both in the original English version and in its French translation to the Institute of Economic Sciences, together with seven other American and West European works on economic development.<sup>14</sup>

In an article in the December 18, 1963 issue of *Kultura* published in Warsaw, Janusz Kolszyński singled out Radio Free Europe as one of the “strongest and best equipped subversive propaganda centers.” He also mentioned the student assistance program for visiting Poles, whose purpose was to carry out “diversionist political activities among the students, scientists, and other individuals who are coming to England as stipendium grantees, or as guests of English institutions. By offering financial assistance, the agents of the Committee attempt to acquire new contacts, to extract information which is later sent to the head office of RFE.” The aim of the article was to frighten Polish visitors away from the Association of Polish Students and Postgraduates, whose program, though small, seemed by implication to be successful.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 3. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Microfiche Provisional Box 3.

<sup>14</sup> “Echoes in Poland from FEC Book-Mailing,” PSPD Highlight Item 9/13/63, 1. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Microfiche. See also “Economist’s Book Irks Polish Red,” *The New York Times*, August 25, 1963. Kurowski was formerly on the staff of a leftist Catholic weekly, but his book was published by the Polish Academy of Sciences.

<sup>15</sup> HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 231, Folder 213/14. The article also named [Andrzej] Stypulkowski in London and the Polish Combatants Association in Italy headed by Witold Zahorski. RFE commented: “It is encouraging to note that so little details appear to be known concerning the confidential aspects of the major WEOD [West European Operations Division] program.”

A quasi-official mention of the book mailing program appeared in the August 1963 (No. 16) issue of the Czech communist party central committee bi-weekly *Život strany*. Discussing the ideological struggle under peaceful coexistence, the article by Jaroslav Klíma stated that “A special and important place in the ideological fight waged by imperialism against socialism is held by the endeavor on the part of the world reactionaries to smuggle their reactionary ideology into the socialist countries from the outside [...] The chief aim is the weakening of socialist countries from within [...] to exploit the differences of views in respect to certain key questions in the international communist movement and to split the fraternal Communist Parties and countries.” After describing the propaganda broadcasts of Radio Free Europe, Klíma mentioned “the extensive postal pamphlet traffic for the ideological penetration of the CSSR [...] by various means,” and demonstrated its extent by stating that “in 1960, over a million and half pieces of printed matter arrived in the CSSR. In 1961, their number increased by 300,000 [...] In the pamphlets ‘the American way of life’ is propagated, the Western democracies are extolled, and the countries of the socialist camp are slandered.” According to Klíma, “The so-called ‘mailing project’ organized in the U.S. was among the chief ideological diversion drives.” He mistakenly credited all mailings to the “People to People Foundation Inc.,” founded in 1957. He listed the various categories of books used, citing John Strachey’s *The End of Empire* mailed by PSPD in 1960 as typical of anti-communist literature derogatory to the socialist nations. Books on the European Economic Community, sent regularly in great variety, were mentioned as typical of works that sought to prove the superior vitality of capitalism. The article attacked the “treacherous” émigrés who “for dollars, pounds, marks, and other currencies” publish bourgeois periodicals and carry on “ideological sabotage.” In Minden’s opinion, “The article was obviously inspired in tone and content by reports given at the July 1963 Moscow conference on ideological matters: it is noteworthy that neither promotes restrictive measures and that both engage only mildly in polemics and call for improved communist propaganda to counter bourgeois penetration.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> George C. Minden to the President [FEC], September [1963] Highlights, dated October 4, 1963, 1. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Microfiche Provisional Box 3. For the full English translation of the *Život strany* article

Finally, *Plamen* (Prague, No. 8, 1963) reviewed the exile publication *Perspektivy* as an example of the “sick émigré branch of the nation,” but admitted that it was keeping up the Czech language and culture abroad.<sup>17</sup>

The November 1963 issue of *Irodalomtörténet* (Literary history), published by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, attacked *Az Isten szörnyetege* (God’s monster), László Vatai’s study on the poet Endre Ady, for its religious orientation. But it also recognized the work’s high standard of scholarship and admitted the mistake of communist critics in neglecting religious poetry. A Romanian doctoral candidate at the Bucharest School of Economics attacked Jean Fourastié’s article “Histoire de demain” in *Probleme Economice* (October 1963) for its “bourgeois pseudo theories of planning.”<sup>18</sup> The fact that the mailing of Western books had a far-reaching influence on Hungarian intellectual life was confirmed not only by letters from book recipients and visitors to the West, but from time to time by the regime media as well. An article in the provincial daily *Hajdú-Bihari Napló*, published in Debrecen, accused the University of Debrecen of allowing bourgeois ideology to infect their students and professors. According to the paper, this ideology was transmitted by the many Western books that reached the town and the university.<sup>19</sup>

Various press attacks occurred in the summer of 1964. A letter attacking the Czechoslovak government’s more rigid cultural policies was smuggled out of the country and printed in the Paris émigré publication *Svědectví*. On July 26, 1964, the Prague party daily *Rudé právo* published an article attacking *Svědectví* and its editor Pavel Tigrid, and indirectly admitted that the letter was genuine, written by Czechs in Czechoslovakia.<sup>20</sup> The May 1964 issue of *Novo Vreme*, the ideo-

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entitled “The Ideological Diversion of Imperialism and its Manifestations in the CSSR,” see RFE Czechoslovak Press Survey No. 1344, October 16, 1963, 1–11.

<sup>17</sup> September [1963] Highlights, dated October 4, 1963, 2.

<sup>18</sup> November [1963] Highlights, dated December 6, 1963, 1 and 2, respectively.

<sup>19</sup> June [1964] Highlights, dated July 17, 1964, 1. For Minden, this meant that Debrecen had become “an important focal point for the book mailing program.”

<sup>20</sup> July [1964] Highlights, dated August 10, 1964, 3.

logical monthly of the Bulgarian communist party, claimed: "Chinese propaganda material was sent to Bulgaria, published in Bulgarian in the U.S." This was a reference to a PSPD project in the spring of 1963, when an article from the Peking *People's Daily* attacking French Communist Party leader Maurice Thorez, and by implication the USSR, was translated into Bulgarian and mailed to Bulgaria.<sup>21</sup>

The vigilance of the Soviet ideological watchdogs in the Baltic republics was also demonstrated during a rare occurrence in 1964. Minden's Latvian book mailing center advisor, Alfreds Bērziņš, aroused Soviet ire by his letter to *The New York Times* from July 6, 1964, denying Khrushchev's allegations that the Baltic countries were better off under Soviet rule than ever before. *Izvestiya* (July 12, 1964) reacted violently with a supposed letter to the editor, which called Bērziņš everything from a liar to a betrayer of his people, and belittled his literary talents and books. Bērziņš's two books *Labie Gadi* (The good years) and *The Unpunished Crime*, published in English in New York, had been sent by PSPD to Latvia. On July 17, 1964, the Riga radio joined in the attack, quoting *Izvestija*. Previously, in its June 1964 issue, the Riga monthly *Dzimtenes Balss* (Voice of the homeland) had also attacked *Labie gadi*.<sup>22</sup>

That the book program did not go unnoticed by the Czechoslovak communist authorities was made evident by a number of attacks in the press. The Czech magazine *My 64* (We 1964), in its No. 5 issue attacked *Československo* (Czechoslovakia), a book published by the Council of Free Czechoslovakia in Washington, D.C., which PSPD had distributed directly to Czechoslovak visitors to the West. Under the title "Misconceptions," the magazine ironically quoted from the book advice intended for Americans of Czech origin visiting Czechoslovakia.<sup>23</sup> An article, "The Trojan Horse of the Imperialists,"

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 6. Minden forwarded Berzins's letter to *The New York Times* and the *Izvestija* article to the FEC President, and they could not be found on the relevant microfiche. Alfred Berzins (1899–1977) worked as a Latvian editor, and then as a consultant for FEC from 1951 to 1968. On Lithuania, see Tomas Venclova, "Translations of World Literature and Political Censorship in Lithuania," *Lituanus*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (1979): 1–9.

<sup>23</sup> January [1965] Highlights, dated February 1965, 10. The magazine was a new one intended mainly for young readers.

published in the Prague monthly *Nová mysl* (The new mind), No. 4, 1965, stated: "Another form of furthering enemy ideology consists of the distribution and spreading of various publications, literature, leaflets, etc. [...] The ideological 'diversion' carried out in this manner includes also the so-called 'mailing project' organized in the USA. At present, 'scientific books' are mailed to prominent political, cultural, and economic workers as well as to the officials of social organizations."<sup>24</sup>

The Hungarian translation of *Panorama des idées contemporaines*, edited by Gaëtan Picon, entitled *Korunk szellemi körképe*, was profusely mailed and given out to Hungarian visitors to the West. From the start, it was tremendously successful and honored by a lengthy editorial in *Napjaink* (Our days), a literary magazine published in the city of Miskolc. The editorial emphasized the book's importance, but attacked it for being "basically anti-Marxist." It warned that Picon's work had been published for the "purpose of ideological penetration" and commented: "This is of course no longer a joke, even if we are accused of trying to find an enemy behind every bush."<sup>25</sup>

The Czechoslovak regime remained as vigilant as ever with a mixture of warnings and attacks in the press. The November 28, 1965 issue of *Rudé právo* carried an attack on Vojtěch N. Duben's *Ledy se hnuly* (The ice is moving), a Czech language book published in the U.S., dealing with the struggle of Czech intellectuals against the regime, which PSPD had both mailed and distributed. The paper wrote: "Behind a seemingly objective picture of the situation of our cultural front in recent years [...] we may detect [...] non-liberal conclusions of one of the advocates of the so-called 'gradualist' theory which argues that anti-communism must [...] take advantage of all the development stages of the socialist state in waging its continuous offensive."<sup>26</sup>

On December 1, 1965, the party daily *Rudé právo* carried excerpts of a speech by Jiří Hendrych, chairman of the Ideological Commission, in which he attacked "blind" acceptance of Western films and plays. He

<sup>24</sup> May [1965] Highlights, dated June 8, 1965, 8.

<sup>25</sup> December [1965] Highlights, dated January 13, 1965, 5. The book was translated with PSPD's assistance.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 10. Jiří Hendrych (1913–?) was party secretary general in charge of ideology, became deputy prime minister in 1962, and was later fired.

said: "Any hazy ideas about these things weaken in some people their socialist consciousness and their sense of what is good for socialism and what is damaging it [...] Sometimes we are blindly presenting works from the West which make an attempt to impose upon our spectators a feeling of human powerlessness, to present life and any human effort as nonsense [...] Some of our authors are grafting such views on our reality in their works, a fact which weakens the morale."<sup>27</sup>

The effectiveness of the mailing program was also evident in Bulgaria. In an article in the November 1965 issue of *Partien Zhivot* (Party life), the communist organ, Ivan Vulov, the former deputy head of the Department of Propaganda and Agitation of the Central Committee, stated: "[...] there is an increase in the streams of propaganda material sent to us from the capitalist countries. Under all kinds of business and private addresses, numerous consignments of propaganda arrive daily. The most frequently sent are all kinds of fashion and illustrated magazines which in appearance have no political character, but aim at influencing politically unstable Bulgarian citizens, at diverting them from the socialist way of life, of awakening in them an admiration for bourgeois culture [...] Many and diverse are the channels for the penetration of anti-communist propaganda in our country [...] It becomes increasingly more operative, flexible, and skillful." Vulov asked if free entry of publications from capitalist countries should be allowed, and answered: "Everyone realizes that this would be entirely wrong [...] Our country would be flooded with reactionary, decadent, pornographic, and other harmful newspapers, magazines, and books [...] as is the case with certain neighboring countries."<sup>28</sup>

Works written by émigré authors and published with the assistance of PSPD were particularly singled out for unfavorable criticism. A review of the exile publication *Polish Literature Abroad*, Vol. I, edited by Tymon Terlecki and published with PSPD assistance, appeared in the July–September 1965 issue of *Kultura i Społeczeństwo* (Culture and society). The greater part of the review contained an attack on the book for its anti-communist views. "Despite the book's alleged objectivity," it read, "most of the chapters clearly tend to demonstrate that

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 14.

Polish literature abroad is a militant, committed literature; and of course being militant is in this case synonymous with having a negative approach toward the political and social changes in Poland.” Even so, it concluded: “Aside from its scholarly significance, *Polish Literature Abroad* is important because it throws much light on the social and cultural life of the Poles living abroad.”<sup>29</sup>

An article in *Ifjú Kommunista* (Young communist) of May 1966, entitled “The Third Tactic,” attacked Radio Free Europe and the mailing of books from the West into Hungary. Written by József Pálffy, it stated: “The ‘brain trusts’ in America were forced to change their tactics. They have renounced ‘liberating’ the ‘captive nations’ and their new aim is to bring about an ‘internal explosion’ in the people’s democracies. They have multiplied their propaganda media; their radio stations RFE and VOA are screaming day and night.” The article stated that though these tactics helped cause the Hungarian revolt, they eventually failed. Pálffy also discussed the mailing program: “Émigrés returning on a visit to Hungary and also visitors to foreign countries returning home, and tourists coming to Hungary, often bring in books and publications by the hundreds, for distribution at random or to given addresses. The same is done by American publishers, West German publishers, or publishing houses sponsored and financed by the imperialists who mail books and publications from abroad to an ever increasing number of people.” Pálffy concluded: “Against this new tactic of the imperialists, the best defense is not new rules but true patriotic action. Let RFE shout. What can it achieve if nobody will turn his radio on to the RFE wavelength? Let them send books by the ton. What harm can be done if we refuse to accept them and drop them unread in the dump where they belong.”<sup>30</sup>

Under the heading “The Anti-Communist Apparatus of the U.S.,” the Czechoslovak Communist Party Central Committee fort-

<sup>29</sup> February [1966] Highlights, dated March 1966, 1. Tymon Terlecki (1905–2000) was one of the most versatile historians of Polish literature.

<sup>30</sup> May [1966] Highlights, dated June 14, 1966, 6. Considering the thousands of requests and acknowledgements PSPD received each year from Hungary, Pálffy’s advice seemed pretty futile. In a book published in 1965 under the title *A fellazítás kortesei* [The agents of the loosening up policy], Péter Hun “exposed” the U.S. policy of psychological warfare and the role the émigrés played in it (see 1–71).



nightly *Nová mysl* (No. 24, November 28, 1967) published a study by Otomar Červenka on U.S. agencies engaged “in the organization of management and implementation of propaganda directed to foreign countries.” A passage of the article, which failed to mention the International Advisory Council and other fictitious FEC-supported organizations, read: “There are, however, also other, specialized organizations. Among the most known of them, those which participate directly in ideological subversion belong the National Committee for Free Europe (with its transmitter Free Europe in Munich), the Congress for Cultural Freedom, the Crusade for Freedom, the American Institute for the Liberation of the Nations of Russia, the American Committee for Liberation from Bolshevism, the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations, and a great number of others [...].”<sup>31</sup>

An article in the February 2, 1968 issue of the Bratislava literary weekly *Kultúrny život* (Cultural life) referred to articles published in *Naše snahy* (Our efforts), a Slovak émigré periodical published in Canada and distributed by PSPD to Czechoslovaks, both through mailings and through person-to-person distribution channels. The article was written by Gustáv Husák, the former Commissioner of the Interior, on the twentieth anniversary of the Communist takeover in Czechoslovakia. In it, Husák attacked Fedor Hodža, Martin Kvetko, and Jozef Lettrich, former leaders of the pre-communist Democratic Party of Slovakia, now in exile, for their statements published in *Naše snahy*. “Even some people who are responsible for the policies and bankruptcy of the Democratic Party of Slovakia, are now—as professed democratic Slovak exiles—claiming that the [current] process of democratization [under Alexander Dubček] in our country actually means a return to their policies.” Of course, Husák denied that this was so.<sup>32</sup> In a rare instance of reported Romanian public displeasure, *Contemporanul*, a political-cultural weekly published in Bucharest, carried in its February 23, 1968 issue an entirely negative review of Roger Garaudy’s *Marxisme du XXème siècle*.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Memorandum from EZRA/Czechoslovak Desk to David F. Grozier, Arthur J. Brew, and Henri O. Hart, dated December 12, 1967. HIA, RFER/RL Corporate Records.

<sup>32</sup> George C. Minden to the President [FEC], January–February [1968] Highlights, dated March 14, 1968, 10.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.



The Polish émigré weekly *Wiadomości*, published in London, was mentioned in an article in the March 14, 1968 issue of *Życie Warszawy*, a Warsaw daily. The article, entitled “A Dictatorship of Half-wits,” was an attack on the Polish writer Stefan Kisielewski for his criticism of Polish government censorship laws at the seventh congress of the Writers’ Union and for his call for their replacement by a new law. It also referred to an article written by Kisielewski about French president de Gaulle’s visit to Poland for the American magazine *Interplay*, excerpts of which were published in *Wiadomości*.<sup>34</sup>

The impact of Western literature in Bulgaria and the related fears of the communist regime were also evidenced by the following information duly reported by Minden in his bi-monthly Highlights Report: “A professor at Sofia University who visited the Arts and Craft Arcade in London informed the PSPD representative there that the representative of the communist party at the University had called a meeting of the faculty and asked them to check their students’ essays to find out if any were based on foreign publications. He said that the Czechoslovak intellectuals were corrupted by Western books and publications, by visits to the West, and contacts with Westerners, and that this must not be repeated in Bulgaria. The same professor stated that all members of the faculty at Sofia University, and in particular the professors of the English Dept., were extremely grateful for books sent to them by [the] International Book Fellowship.”<sup>35</sup>

In an important polemical article, the PUWP daily *Trybuna Ludu* quoted widely from Adam Ciołkosz’s *Socialism in Western Europe*, a book published in London under PSPD aegis.<sup>36</sup> The Polish regime had a particular dislike for the strongly anti-communist Polish-language émigré monthly *Kultura* and its Paris publisher, the Institut Littéraire. In December 1968, Witold Filler, a communist journalist, prepared a

<sup>34</sup> May–June [1968] Highlights, dated July 12, 1968, 4–5. Speaking at the Congress of the Polish Writers Union in Katowice, Silesian district party chief and party Politburo member Edward Gierek warned Polish writers against including anti-socialist themes in their works, and stated: “There is not and never will be any unlimited freedom of speech for the enemies of socialism, for writers [...] who in literature express the interests of the international agencies of imperialism.” Radio Warsaw in Polish, June 7, 1968.

<sup>35</sup> May–June [1968] Highlights, dated July 12, 1968, 26–7.

<sup>36</sup> September–October [1968] Highlights, dated November 11, 1968, 3.

pamphlet for the Polish ministry of national defense entitled "Theory and Practice of Paris *Kultura*," with the aim of proving that *Kultura* was an organ of U.S. and West German intelligence apparatuses. Interviewed on Polish television on December 2, 1968, Filler conceded that "A large part of the printed copies of *Kultura*, about 1,500 a month, find their way illegally into Poland."<sup>37</sup> Not to be left behind, the weekly *Życie Literackie* (Literary life), published in Kraków, in its issue of December 8, 1968, contained an attack on Jerzy Giedroyc, the editor of *Kultura*, and on Leopold Tyrmand, an exile writer who defected some years earlier from Poland.<sup>38</sup> Some of the book reviews turned out to be both critical and informative. *Prawo I Życie* (Law and life) of Warsaw, January 12, 1969, published a review of Adam Ciołkosz's *Socjalizm na zachodzie Europy: Czternaście dróg do socjalizmu* (Socialism in Western Europe: Fourteen roads to Socialism), a book published with PSPD assistance in 1968. While the review was ostensibly critical, it also allowed readers to learn about how socialist ideas were developing and functioning in Western Europe.<sup>39</sup> January Grzedzinski, a Polish writer known for his courageous opposition to the Gomułka regime, was expelled as a member at the seventh Congress of Polish Journalists held in Warsaw on March 14–15, 1968, for publishing articles in the "diversionary" émigré monthly *Kultura* in Paris. Gomułka singled out *Kultura* for a special attack in a speech on March 19, 1968, following demonstrations at Warsaw University protesting the regime's repressive cultural policies.

The October 7, 1968 issue of *Sztandar Ludu* (Standard [flag] the people) carried a lengthy article by Major Aleksander Muszynski,

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<sup>37</sup> November–December [1969] Highlights, dated January 15, 1969, 4. Filler's admission testified to the effectiveness of the Polish person-to-person distribution program.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> March–April [1969] Highlights, dated May 12, 1969, 2. The Polish regime's concern over the penetration of Western ideas by means of "ideological subversion" was also made evident by an article by Leszek Sroka in the July 1969 issue of *Prasa Polska*, the monthly journal of the Polish Journalists Union. RFE Polish Press Survey No. 2216, 9–11. In 1968, the Polish Embassy in Paris spread reports to deter Polish visitors from approaching Jerzy Giedroyc's *Kultura* at Maisons-Laffitte by claiming that since 1961 it had had contacts with RFE, received financial help to publish Polish and Russian books, and was under investigation by the French authorities.

presumably a member of the Polish security services. It was both a clear reference to Minden's very effective person-to-person distribution program, and an attempt to intimidate those Poles who accepted Western literature while abroad. The author discussed the "ideological and political subversion" campaign against the "socialist camp" in order to "loosen the ties binding Poland with the other socialist countries and [...] undermine our alliance with the Soviet Union." In addition to "hostile radio stations," he mentioned unspecified people "who pass on foreign publications which are forbidden in Poland," and warned people traveling abroad to be on their guard about whom they meet and talk to. "In many centers," Muszynski wrote, "hundreds of thousands of copies of various propaganda publications are printed which, directly or under various covers, attack the socialist system. The respective centers try to smuggle part of those publications into our country. For this purpose they make use of our citizens who may be staying temporarily abroad. Unfortunately people can be found [...] who fulfill these wishes. Part of this literature is smuggled into our country by some foreigners who visit Poland. This literature," he continued, "is aimed at sowing confusion among various groups of our intelligentsia and of course our youth, especially among students. [...] The various foreign centers, headed by Free Europe, intensified their activities [...] among the technical intelligentsia which [...] was supposed to play an essential role disturbing the pre-[party] congress campaign." The author claimed that these aims would fail because the vast majority of the intelligentsia "is closely bound up with socialist changes in our country." He listed a wide range of "preventive methods" on the part of the Polish security services, such as "talks with persons who, under the influence of hostile propaganda, have assumed harmful social and political attitudes." Some of these talks "are of an ideological and educational nature," and in some cases, "we pass on this kind of information to the management of the given person's place of work."<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Four-page English translation of the article dated December 5, 1968, FE Inc. President's Office, HIA, REF/RL Corporate Records. In a January 9, 1969 broadcast on ideological subversion, Radio Warsaw claimed that all Western "radio, publishing, press, and other centers are generally guided from the Pentagon" by "a staff of American specialists whose good advice [...] is an attempt at the weakening of our defensive [sic] system."

The tougher trend in Czechoslovakia after 1968 and the continuing impact of the book distribution program was demonstrated by an article in the party daily *Rudé právo* (Prague, June 27, 1969), entitled "Not Just Drops, But Rain, Too." It described how Czechs and Slovaks traveling in the West brought back "books, slides, newspapers, which then serve to 'tune in' colleagues and friends psychologically to the 'wavelength' of interest to that Western country [visited by the Czechs and Slovaks] or which act as a catalyst to stir up envy and jealousy [...] The 'infection' affects not only individuals but also trade unions and party organs and whole generations."<sup>41</sup>

By the end of 1969, Soviet concern over retaining control of Eastern Europe in the wake of the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia led Soviet propagandists to launch a broad campaign against Western media and institutions. This took the form of regular and violent polemics directed mainly against RFE and other Western media and scholarly institutions, not only in their Czechoslovak broadcasts, but also for the benefit of Russian, West European, and even more distant audiences. A RFE Report dated November 10, 1969, listed an abundant series of such Soviet polemics against "subversive ideological activities" and "bourgeois propaganda." The book distribution program remained unmentioned, but many of the American and West European periodicals and journals supplied by Minden's PSPD were. They included the London newspapers *Observer* and *Times*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Time Magazine*, and West German and French newspapers. It was alleged that Western propaganda against the East European countries was coordinated by some 20 organizations, among them a number of universities and foundations that were PSPD sponsors. Three scholars, whose works had been frequently mailed to Eastern Europe and distributed to East European visitors to the West, were singled out: Herbert Marcuse, Zbigniew Brzezinski, and Hermann Kahn.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> July–August [1969] Highlights, dated September 12, 1969, 8–9.

<sup>42</sup> "Soviet Campaign Against Western Media and Institutions, REF Report dated November 19, 1969, 1–12, especially 5–7. A talk on "Bourgeois Nationalism in the Service of Imperialism," given on March 15, 1969 on Moscow Radio's domestic service by Dr. Yelena Dmitryeva, warned that the aim of "imperialist propaganda" was "the erosion of communism" and

An article published on March 28, 1970, in the Ostrava daily *Nová svoboda* (New freedom) cautioned Czechoslovak readers against the “ideological diversions of the enemy.” It stated:

Since 1958, the United States—and later other Western countries as well—have been running, within the framework of ideological diversion, a so-called mailing project. The whole operation has undergone many changes but it is still continuing. While most parcels in the past contained publications and printed matter violently attacking our country, our institutions and private citizens have more recently been receiving all sorts of books for free, especially in the fields of economics, philosophy, sociology, and other social sciences, literature, newspapers, and magazines. They are even more dangerous because the gradual infiltration of bourgeois ideology was accomplished in a subtler, underhand manner. One of the new phenomena of the “mailing project” is the use of two-way tourist traffic. While mailed items have a limited radius of impact, the importation of printed matter by foreigners and some of our citizens has reached a wider area and has been more effective.<sup>43</sup>

A symposium on psychological warfare with the aim of “counteracting the psychological warfare and ideological diversion waged by the imperialists” was held in Warsaw on 21–25 April 1970, attended by military and civilian delegations from all five East European countries, East Germany, and the USSR. Sponsored by the Research Center for East-West Relations and the Central Political Administration of the Polish Army, it was part of periodical conferences of a similar nature held in the various East European capitals at irregular intervals to integrate and standardize bloc efforts in this field. The previous meeting had taken place in Sofia in February 1968, in the wake of an ideological confer-

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“the weakening of the unity of the world socialist system.” JPRS, USSR International Affairs, March 18, 1969, 49. Throughout the book program, Minden mailed and distributed the main works of all three authors.

<sup>43</sup> George C. Minden, Director, PSPD, Free Europe, Inc., Semi-Annual Report, Calendar 1970 (First Half), undated, 11. HIA, George Minden Collection, Box 1.

ence in Moscow in January 1967. According to the Polish press, the topics discussed included the strategy and tactics of the psychological war waged by imperialism and ideas for counteracting this war; the role of mass communication media in neutralizing and opposing the enemy's ideological subversion during peace time; resisting the same in case of an armed conflict; and coordination and cooperation of research into the problem of the psychological war waged by the imperialist West. 24 papers were read and 19 persons took the floor during the ensuing discussions. The unanimous opinion of the participants was that "imperialist ideological subversion was constantly being escalated [...] but the communists had truth on their side and this would enable them [...] to unmask the lies and slanders spread by the imperialist experts."<sup>44</sup> At the closing reception, Jan Szydlak, a deputy Politburo member and a secretary of the PUWP Central Committee, stressed "the necessity for the integration and standardization of those campaigns of the socialist camp which are designed to counteract ideological diversion."<sup>45</sup>

The Kádár regime did not fail to follow Moscow's instructions. In a speech at the Hungarian Party Congress, Politburo member Zoltán Komócsin also discussed the West German-Polish Treaty of 25 November 1970, and made an indirect reference to RFE and to unspecified émigré organizations in West Germany when he said that it would be "advisable" for the Bonn government "[...] to adopt measures to liquidate the activities of officially supported propaganda machines and émigré organizations which conduct diversionist campaigns against the socialist countries from its territory."<sup>46</sup> Meanwhile,

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<sup>44</sup> "The Warsaw Psychological Warfare Symposium," a four-page report dated May 26, 1970, submitted by RFE Acting Director Richard H. Cook to Free Europe Inc. President William P. Durkee. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records. The report named all participants.

<sup>45</sup> *Trybuna Ludu*, April 26, 1970. Radio Prague on April 21, 1970, reported the opening of the conference and identified by name the two Czechoslovak participants. *Rudé právo* on April 27, 1970, briefly reported the conclusion of the symposium. The Hungarian party daily *Népszabadság* simply mentioned on April 23, 1970, the opening of the symposium, and a number of Bulgarian newspapers published a TASS report on April 27, 1970.

<sup>46</sup> Hungary, November 1970, 4, undated RFE document. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records. Zoltán Komócsin (1923–1974) belonged to the left wing of the Kádár-led Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party.

Hungary's international postal traffic, including Western publications, had grown from 50 million pieces in 1965 to 90 million in 1970, and the number of prohibited publications reached several thousands. In 1966, the Information Office was handling 12,249 kinds of publications, 8,894 of which originated from capitalist countries. Ten years later, these figures stood at 82,229 and 11,533, respectively. It was from this mass of publications that those deemed undesirable had to be removed. Even if 70% of the Western publications were of a technical and scientific nature and were allowed free entry, not only ideologically unsuitable works were confiscated but also publications on fashion and home decoration, because they could awaken in readers demands that "could not be satisfied."<sup>47</sup> A HSWP Politburo resolution of May 22, 1973, on the "strengthening of the struggle against imperialist propaganda," and a Central Committee Secretariat report on its implementation dated December 4, 1978, were declared invalid by the Politburo on October 11, 1983. Dealing basically with how to counteract hostile "imperialist" and "bourgeois" propaganda in general, and singling out Radio Free Europe but not mentioning Western literature, the resolution called for modernization and better information and coordination on the part of all party and state bodies involved. The last sentence was an admission of a major deficiency: "The relevant state bodies of socialist countries have also established a similarly comprehensive framework of cooperation. However, international experience is not utilized efficiently in our work."<sup>48</sup>

In the December 1974 issue of the North American edition of the *World Marxist Review*, the worldwide theoretical journal of communist

<sup>47</sup> MOL (Hungarian National Archives) M.KS 288.f.5/893.ő.e. (1983.10.11) 28–40/91; MOL M-KS 288.f.5/893.ő.e. (1983.10.11) 41–5/91; and MOL M-KS 288.f.5/893.ő.e. (1983.10.11) 57–60/91. When the MSWP was succeeded by the HSP in October 1989, all HSWP decisions, including those of 1973 and 1983, were annulled. Béla Révész to the author, January 3, 2009, 1–2, and July 16, 2012.

<sup>48</sup> Report on the execution of the resolution of the Politburo made on May 22, 1973, concerning the strengthening of the fight against imperialist propaganda and a proposal for future tasks. MOL, M-KS 288, f.7/566. ő.e. See also "Az imperialisták 'fellazító' tevékenységéről szóló határozatok' (Resolutions about the 'loosening up' activity of the imperialists), in Tabajdi and Ungváry, *Elhallgatott múlt*, 36–42.



parties, Bogumił Suika, the deputy head of the foreign department of the Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP) Central Committee, not only attacked Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, but also what he called "the cold-war infrastructure of the capitalist West." For him, "cultural exchanges, exchanges of information, the press, TV programs, films, etc." were "the ideological aspects—the 'super-structure'—of international relations." Suika claimed that people in the socialist countries knew more about capitalist countries than vice versa. Between 1945 and 1971, 407 plays by U.S. authors were staged in Poland, versus only four Polish plays in the U.S., and 828 American works of fiction were printed in Poland against 90 Polish authors in the U.S. While Poland printed 1,249 books by French authors, France published only 119 Polish works, and the same discrepancy existed when comparing Poland with England, Italy, and other capitalist countries. In a footnote, he called this a policy of "cultural blockade" similar to that against Soviet literature and arts in force in the United States. "These figures," Suika wrote, "refute claims that people in socialist countries are 'isolated from culture' and denied information about the life and problems in capitalist countries [...] We have no cause to fear what Western politicians call the free exchange of people, ideas, culture, and information." On the other hand, under conditions of détente, "methods of ideological subversion" against the socialist states must be removed from the sphere of the "ideological struggle," because they violate the principle of non-interference in the affairs of others. "If," Suika continued, "'revolution is not exportable,' export of counterrevolution is doubly intolerable, as are attempts to hold up the social progress of other people or to re-impose on them outdated and rejected forms of government and society." While singling out RFE and RL, Suika did not mention the dissemination of Western books and periodicals, but his message was clear.<sup>49</sup>

Because Minden's semi-annual reports starting with the second half of 1973 are missing, we have no more written evidence about later regime criticisms and attacks against the book distribution program. This is particularly regrettable in the case of Poland during the pontificate of John Paul II, the rise of the Solidarity free trade union move-

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<sup>49</sup> Suika, "The Détente and the Confrontation of Ideas."



ment, and the subsequent imposition of martial law. However, an official 1984 document of the PUWP Central Committee Information Department submitted to the Central Committee Secretariat contains a clear reference to the book program. In an analysis of "Western propaganda" during martial law, it first named the Western radio stations, especially Radio Free Europe, as the most important instruments of "subversive enemy propaganda" against Polish society. The analysis covered non-radio propaganda activities as follows: "An important function in shaping hostile tendencies among the intelligentsia is fulfilled by publications sent from the West through various channels of communication. During eight months of 1983, 470 thousand books and 5.2 million copies of printed materials and tapes were sent to Poland through one Warsaw post office alone. For example, 160,000 copies of the West German publication *PROFIL* were sent. There were grounds for questioning as anti-Communist or anti-state only some 5,000 books, pamphlets, and tapes. The majority of these publications had an ostensibly neutral stance but in fact consisted of cunning bourgeois propaganda formulae correlated with the main themes of ideological subversion. These publications are directed mostly at intellectuals, especially at higher educational institutes and renowned libraries. This problem requires separate detailed analysis." This "subversive" propaganda "takes into consideration a Polish specificity and susceptibility of different social groups to bourgeois ideology as a consequence of social consciousness since the 1980s. [Western] propaganda emphasizes as a point of departure the special ties of Poland and the Poles with Western culture and resistance of the Polish nation to communist ideology." The analysis recommended the further improvement and better coordination of regime counter-propaganda, a bi-annual public opinion survey to "gauge the depth and direction of the [social] destruction resulting from enemy propaganda," and "the working out of didactic publications [...] and the distribution of popular scientific works in the area of psychological warfare."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Central Committee Information Department to CC Secretariat Conference, sent to Secretary, 9.III.1984 L.dz. ks/556/84, Warsaw March 9, 1984. AAN, Polish State Archives, obtained by Lechosław Gawlikowski, translated by A. Ross Johnson.

The reference in the analysis to the book program and its impact on Poland confirms the continuing success of Minden's operations in the last decade of the Cold War. According to Minden's Polish national editor Adam Rudzki, it was during the 1980s that the largest number of books was smuggled into Poland, many of them from Sweden. Rudzki's only regret was that by then, more emphasis was being placed on the USSR than on Poland and the other East European countries.<sup>51</sup> Unfortunately, his reports on Polish book program activities, together with the more general reports on all target countries prepared and sent by Minden to Washington, must still be made available to researchers and historians.

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<sup>51</sup> E-mail communications from his son Marek Rudzki in New York dated July 12, 2011, and August 16, 2010. He is the author of a brief study on Minden's book program with special emphasis on Poland, published in Polish in *Zeszyty Historyczne*, No. 134 (Instytut Literacki, Paris): 217–24. More information is provided in this book's chapters on the staff of Minden's PSPD/IAC/ILC and on the person-to-person book distribution program.



## CHAPTER 11

# The Person-to-Person Book Distribution Project: A Direct Way to Reach East Europeans

### *The Early Polish Program in 1958–1959*

The person-to-person distribution program for Polish visitors to the West started in January 1958 under the auspices of the Free Europe Press (FEP) in New York, with Andrzej Stypułkowski, a young Polish émigré, coordinating the program from London. On December 1, 1958, the program's activities were transferred to the East Europe Institute, Inc. (EEI), with offices at 35 East 53<sup>rd</sup> Street in New York. EEI was described as a private organization incorporated into the state of New York, and "its purpose [was] to facilitate distribution of literature to Eastern Europe, particularly to Poland, with emphasis on exchanges and individual contact."<sup>1</sup> The director of EEI was Sam S. Walker Jr., vice president of the Free Europe Committee (FEC), in charge of publication projects as head of its Free Europe Press division. Like FEC and FEP until 1970, the EEI was covertly funded by the CIA in the framework of the U.S. political and ideological warfare operations targeting the communist regimes of Eastern Europe.

The transfer was due to the recognition, in October 1958, that the publication of literature in the Polish language and the distribution of publications in Poland would be seriously jeopardized if attributed directly to the Free Europe Committee. In the future, FEP would enter into a contract with EEI whenever it wanted to publish and distribute

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<sup>1</sup> Undated Free Europe Press Project Schedule, HIA, S. S. Walker Collection, Box 4. A Yale graduate, Sam Walker (1926–1992) initiated FEP's balloon and book projects. He retired in 1959 to set up his Walker Publishing Company, a family enterprise, in New York.

in Poland. Because proper handling through non-Polish commercial sponsors was usually too difficult, the more important requests for publications and correspondence emanating from the regular mailing operations were turned over to EEI. The Institute would use its own stationery and submit all purchase requisitions for FEP approval, as well as a full account by the end of each month. There were also problems with FEP's covert mailing operations to Poland, launched in July 1956. This book program was bringing in over a 100 replies each month, and could not be handled properly through the hundreds of sponsors who acted as intermediaries both for mailing books and receiving replies. The only feasible solution was to establish an address fully under FEP control to which requests could be referred to by the sponsor and then handled according to FEC policies. FEP Deputy Director John G. Kirk assumed overall responsibility for the program, and Andrzej Stypułkowski resigned from FEP to become the EEI Representative in London, in coordination with the FEP Munich office under the direction of John P. C. Matthews.<sup>2</sup> The budget for the period January to June 1959 was set at \$18,000, and then raised to \$20,000 due to the program's growth. By February, Stypułkowski reported that after deducting running costs, \$16,500 was being used to purchase books.<sup>3</sup>

The transfer affected only the administrative level of the program, whose already existing structure, methods of distribution, and elaborate network of contacts remained unchanged. Inevitable discrepancies occurred while the change took place. At the same time, the Program Representatives in Britain, France, and Germany took advantage of the quieter Christmas period by making plans to expand the program to countries such as Italy, Belgium, Sweden, and Austria, where

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<sup>2</sup> Undated Proposal to set up an East Europe Institute, *ibid.*, Box 4, and letters from A. Stypułkowski to J. Kirk, November 14, 1959, and December 12, 1959, *ibid.*, Box 9. Andrzej Stypułkowski (1929–1981) earlier worked for the Polonia Book Fund in London. He shared the EEI London office with Daisy Finney, the FEP representative in Britain. John G. Kirk (1928–), the son of the long-time president of Columbia University, worked with Walker at FEC from 1955 until 1959. John P. C. Matthews (1929–2010), a Princeton graduate, joined RFE in New York in 1951 and became head of the FEP office in Munich from 1954 to 1959.

<sup>3</sup> Letter from J. Kirk to A. Stypułkowski, January 9, 1959, 1, and A. Stypułkowski to J. Kirk, February 17, 1959. *Ibid.*, Box 9.

numerous travelers from Poland were expected to arrive, especially during the summer months. At the same time, stockpiles of books at the various distribution points were replenished to meet the expected growing demands in the near future. By May 1959, books were distributed to a good number of Polish visitors in Italy and Belgium.<sup>4</sup>

A study of the five monthly reports submitted by Andrzej Stypułkowski in London to John Kirk in New York provides very detailed statistics about the number of books distributed in the various countries of Western Europe, the number of persons and institutions who received the books, and a country-by-country breakdown of the recipients' professions. The reports, from December 1958 to May 1959, also include four lists of the titles and number of copies (close to 1,500) of books received by the various European distribution centers. The vast majority of the book titles were in Polish (169), some in English and French (28 and 10 titles, respectively), including the French translation of Boris Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago*.

*Statistical summary.* According to the monthly report for December 1958 sent to EEI, 972 books and 136 periodicals were distributed that month in Britain, France, and Germany to 274 recipients from Poland, including four public libraries—an average figure for the winter months. All previous 11 monthly reports from January to November 1958 prepared by FEP are missing. Even so, the last page of the December report is most valuable, as it states that during the calendar year 1958, a total of 13,611 books, which under normal circumstances would not have been allowed to enter Poland through postal channels, were distributed to 4,952 persons through the person-to-person program. However, the overall annual figures do not include the breakdown by country of distribution or by profession of the recipients. Taking an average readership of ten persons per book, it was estimated that over 130,000 persons benefited from the book program.<sup>5</sup> During

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<sup>4</sup> EEI European Representative's Office in London, Person-to-Person Program, Monthly Report for December 1958, 1. Ibid., Box 9.

<sup>5</sup> Monthly Report for December 1958, 1–7, and December 12, 1958 letter from A. Stypułkowski to J. Kirk and John P. C. Matthews, with a good account of the book distribution points operating in Britain, France, Belgium, Italy, and Germany. Ibid., Box 9.

the five first months of 1959, from January to May, 9,372 books were distributed to 2,309 persons, libraries, and institutes. Added to the figures of 1958, this amounts to 21,983 books given to 7,261 recipients during the 17-month period from January 1958 to May 1959.

Book distribution rose steadily after February 1959 thanks to the new distribution points in Italy and Germany, which began operations in certain provincial centers. In addition, better coordination was achieved between all distribution centers and the European Representative in London, with a system by which a group of visitors or a delegation could easily be tracked down in any Western European country at the most convenient time and place.

A compilation of the books distributed and of the recipients according to the country of distribution is worthy of attention. Between December 1958 and May 1959, Britain was clearly in the lead with 5,661 books to 1,309 persons. France came second with 1,886 books to 765 persons. In Italy, 404 books were given to 381 visitors, in Belgium 172 books were given to 119 visitors, and only 137 books were given to 81 persons in Germany, with no German figure given for April 1959. The breakdown of the book recipients by professions is equally noteworthy. Students were by far the most numerous (604), followed by professors and lecturers (230), sportsmen (208), marine officers and sailors (167), engineers (134), office employees (126), teachers (115), clergymen (113), doctors (87), scientists (67), architects (63), journalists (55), economists (49), historians (40), librarians (34), workers (26), active and retired army and navy officers (24), writers and poets (24), businessmen and tradesmen (23), civil servants (23), and farmers (19). 60 persons were listed as intellectuals, and the occupation of 87 persons was undetermined. Unusual recipients also included six politicians, five airline pilots, three tailors, two scouts, and a zoo director. Books were also given to 105 university and public libraries, 99 clubs and institutes, one school, as well as a group of 43 tourists on a cruise in the Mediterranean.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Statistical figures compiled by the author on the basis of the data available in the monthly reports of the EEI European Representative's Office from December 1958 to May 1959. *Ibid.*, Box 9.

*The distribution network.* The increasing number of Poles visiting the West, whether on family visits or as individual tourists or members of various delegations and sports teams, offered an excellent opportunity for the book program. This was so in spite of certain restrictions enforced by the communist regime. The same was true of the increasing number of Poles in the West (with foreign passports) traveling to Poland.

The most extensive book distribution was carried out in Britain through a well established network in London of Polish bookshops, the Polish Library, publishing houses such as Veritas Publications, the largest distributor, Orbis, and Polish Hearth, social and cultural organizations like the Polish Free School of Political and Social Sciences, Polish stands at arts and crafts exhibits, as well as a large number of exile Polish clubs and trusted individuals willing to cooperate. The Polonia Book Fund Ltd. in London, led by Stypułkowski, was entrusted with the distribution of books to visitors from Poland, and became one of the most active early participants in the person-to-person program. It was separated from contacts with FEP in 1959, a measure that was criticized by Adam Rudzki, the Polish plans advisor and national editor who supervised the Polish part of the book project, who felt that the two programs should be closely connected. Between January 1958 and September 1963, Polonia distributed a total of 101,857 books to 37,025 recipients.<sup>7</sup>

In this regard, the large and well-organized Polish community in Britain, which maintained close contacts with relatives and friends at home, certainly played a major role. The program was also well developed in Scotland, with Stanisław Błaszczyk, the representative in Edinburgh, successfully distributing an average of 50 books a month

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<sup>7</sup> HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Boxes 162, 262/5 and 262/6, with detailed reports on book distributors and book recipients. See also a FEC Memo from A. Rudzki to G. Trutnovsky, September 23, 1959, *ibid.*, Box 330. Adam Rudzki, an economist and transport expert, came from London to the U.S. in 1951 and played a key role in the Polish mailing and person-to-person programs until his death in 1987. His son Rudzki Marek provides valuable information in his article "Akcja masowych przekazów książek do Polski w latach 1956–1944" ["Action of mass transfers of books to Poland in the years 1956–1944"], *Zeszyty historyczne* 134 (2000): 219–24.



to crew members of Polish ships calling at Scottish ports. Also, plans were made to set up sub-distribution points in the main "Polish centers" in the Midlands in Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, and Huddersfield.

By the end of 1958, this British network of contacts had reached 60% to 80% of the potential recipients visiting Britain, with an average of 800 books given out monthly to some 250 visitors. This represented just over half of the total number of books given to visitors from Poland to Western Europe. During the month of May, a 100% increase in the number of books distributed was registered. This was due to the increased number of travelers from Britain carrying books to a total of 70 libraries, institutes, clubs, and even government offices in Poland, where they could be reached by a larger number of readers. The program even enlarged its operational area behind the Iron Curtain when a parcel with politically "dangerous" books in Polish was sent to a leading Polish writer vacationing in Karlove Vary, Czechoslovakia. The parcel arrived safely and its receipt was confirmed from Warsaw upon the writer's return home.

France, with Tadeusz Parczewski as the EEI representative there, was quantitatively the second largest distribution center, with an average monthly distribution of 400 books to some 200 visitors. Here, the Librairie Polonaise in Paris played a key role. Paris presented an irresistible attraction to many Polish leading professionals, cultural members, scholars, artists, and even government officials, whose trips were easier to organize thanks to the visa facilities granted by the French authorities. About 30 to 40 Polish students arrived to Paris each month on various scholarships or to attend special study programs. Distribution was concentrated on these students, and the network's contact persons took special care of them. Polish students arriving in France not only showed special interest in Western and émigré publications; they were simply "begging" for them. Nor were large group of visitors overlooked. More than a 100 dancers, actors, and staff members of the Warsaw Drama Theatre and Opera Ballet Company performed in Paris at the International Festival of Dramatic Arts, and they took with them some 130 books back to Poland. The personnel of the Polish Pavillion at the Paris Fair also received 82 books. Members of visiting Polish sports teams were also well provided with books, and French teams visiting

Poland, too, were willing to safely deliver batches of books to Polish sportsmen.<sup>8</sup>

Steps were taken to spread the distribution network to the north of France, mostly to mining areas largely populated by Poles, with a sub-distribution point in Lille. This made it possible to utilize the frequent family visits of French citizens of Polish origin to Poland and of Poles to France. In May of 1959, new distribution points in areas mostly populated by Polish emigrants, such as Saint-Etienne and Metz, came into operation.<sup>9</sup>

Distribution in Italy in 1958 was minimal. It was done through private acquaintances of the Polish representatives in London or Paris. In January 1959, a new distribution point was formally established in Rome under Witold Zahorski, with sub-distribution points in Turin, Florence, and Naples.<sup>10</sup> A total of up to 1,000 Polish visitors were expected to come to Italy that year, individually or in groups of professionals on officially organized and conducted "Orbis" foreign bus tours. They included artists, painters, architects, students, scholars, clergymen, and official delegations. Distribution started well ahead of time, with 67 books given to 18 travelers, and 38 books of political literature taken by a group of university assistant lecturers. In February, 47 books were distributed among 120 Polish passengers on a Mediterranean cruise on the ship "Transylvania." The Permanent Research Base of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Rome attracted prominent members of the Academy, who either stayed in town for longer periods of time or used it as an operational base for research work in Italy. Rome was also a transit point for trade missions and scientists headed for the Middle East, and many travelers from Poland visited the battlefield of Monte Cassino. The staff members of the Polish Pavillion at the Milan Fair were also contacted, and the 81-strong Polish Academic Choir visiting Italy received a total of 120

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<sup>8</sup> Monthly Report for December 1958, 2–3, and Monthly Report for April 1959, 2–3. *Ibid.*, Box 9.

<sup>9</sup> Monthly Report for February 1959, 4. *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Witold Zahorski was the President of the local branch of the Polish Ex-Combatants Association and representative of the Polish-American Immigration and Relief Center (PAIRC) in Rome.

books. A visiting horse-jumping team with their own rail-trucks with horses took over 70 books and hid most of them in the hay.<sup>11</sup>

In Germany, a stockpile of books was deposited in the FEP Munich office, and members of the Polish desk who normally met visitors from Poland were free to deliver them. This actual distribution point for southern Germany via RFE channels became inactive with the termination of the FEP office in Munich. A new system was devised to ensure that the EEI and FEP book programs would not be mixed. The person-to-person stock of books was transferred to the Polish Desk of RFE at the disposal of Jan Nowak, who agreed to supervise their distribution. RFE editors meeting persons and delegations from Poland were expected to make full use of the existing stock of books. However, visitors from Poland tried to avoid direct contact with RFE personnel due to personal security reasons.

Another north German distribution point was set up in February 1959 in Düsseldorf under Kazimierz Odrobny, president of the Polish Refugee Organization in Germany. It was to cover the Ruhr region and the entire area of Northern Germany, including Westphalia, frequently visited by the relatives of old Polish emigrants living there. Because of the unfavorable international situation, no distribution center could be established in West Berlin, an irresistible attraction to Polish and other East European delegations from East Germany. All in all, distribution in Germany remained negligible in comparison with the number of Polish visitors to that country.<sup>12</sup>

Austria, especially Vienna, was a much frequented transit point for Polish visitors to the West and to Yugoslavia. It also frequently hosted international congresses, with delegations from Poland almost always present. This made an unofficial representative in Vienna with a stockpile of books highly desirable, and Stefan Jankowski of the Polish-American Relief and Immigration Committee in Vienna agreed to act as a temporary keeper of EEI books there. Preliminary talks were

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<sup>11</sup> Letter from A. Stypułkowski to J. Kirk dated February 11, 1959, about his trip to Rome; Monthly Report for March 1959, 4; Monthly Report for May 1959, 3. HIA, S. S. Walker Collection, Box 9.

<sup>12</sup> Letter from A. Stypułkowski to J. Kirk dated February 11, 1959, about his trip to Munich and Düsseldorf; Monthly Report for January 1959, 2; and Monthly Report for May 1959, dated July 3, 1959, 3. Ibid.

conducted regarding plans to extend the person-to-person program activities to the Seventh World Youth Festival, held in Vienna from July 26 until August 4, 1959, and a provisional plan for an Austrian center for person-to-person distribution was prepared and submitted for approval. With Sam Walker's recommendation, Stypułkowski traveled to Vienna in early April and met with the Austrian authorities and Austrian youth organizations. He reported a favorable reaction of all Austrian organizations interested in festival activities, and he hoped to set up a new person-to-person distribution point in Vienna for a long-term operation. Stypułkowski was to play key role in the distribution activities of the EEI during the Vienna Youth Festival in the summer of 1959.<sup>13</sup>

Walker, with the assistance of a number of Austrian politicians, organizations, publishers, and the discreet financial involvement of the CIA, managed the special book distribution project targeting the East European and Soviet delegation members attending the communist-organized Youth Festival. This ambitious project deserves separate treatment on the basis of original material recently obtained from the Hoover Institution Archives. According to the final, 29-page report, a team of 15 young Polish exiles from Britain, France, Belgium, and Switzerland, led by Stypułkowski, was sent to Vienna to make contact with members of the 500-strong Polish delegation and other delegates, and to set up a "Polish Exile Information Centre." The Polish team cooperated with other groups from Austria, West Germany, as well as with East European exile organizations. According to the report, 2,480 books and 945 periodicals were distributed to 550 delegates and about 50 tourists. About half of the Polish delegation visited the Information Centre. If the books given to Poles by the Austrian information desk and other channels were included, the report estimated that the total number of books and periodicals collected by Polish delegates exceeded 5,000 copies, with each delegate taking

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<sup>13</sup> Monthly Report for March 1959, 2. Planned activities for the Vienna Youth Festival were first mentioned in the Monthly Report for January 1959, 2; Monthly Report for April 1959, 2; and letter from Stypułkowski to Sam Walker dated April 1, 1959. Ibid. The EEI book distribution activities at the Vienna Youth Festival (managed by Sam Walker), and their planning, implementation, and results deserve a separate study.

away at least one volume and many as much as 10. During the 10-day period of the festival, 3,000 contacts were made, of which 60%–70% were Poles.<sup>14</sup>

The representative in Belgium, Władysław Drozdowski, was one of the organizers of the Polish book exhibit at the Brussels World Fair, and he continued to be active after the liquidation of the exhibit in October 1958. In February 1959, he reported successful attempts at distributing political publications to a number of Polish travelers to Belgium. The country had earlier been the scene of a sensational affair, discovered by the Belgian police, concerning communist regime intelligence agents gathering information on all Polish exile organizations and initiatives. It was the Polish book exhibit at the Brussels World Fair that had attracted the special interest of the Polish regime. With the Embassy reluctant to interfere after the discreditable affair, the reinstatement of the book distribution program happened at the right time. By mid-March 1959, after the proper Belgian authorities had been informed in advance, the Belgian distribution center was officially established. The approval was granted with the request that the program be conducted discreetly, because the spy network of the Polish regime had not been completely broken up. By April, activities were concentrated on Brussels—with the visit of 50 to 70 individuals each month—Liege, and Antwerp with two to three Polish merchant ships calling every week and their crews receiving specially selected sets of books. There was also a permanent Polish Fishing Base in Ostende. The total estimated figure for Belgium was 250 books a month, with

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<sup>14</sup> Final Report on the Activities of Person-to-Person (Polish) Program at the Seventh World Youth Festival in Vienna, July 26 until August 4, 1959, 5. HIA, S. S. Walker Collection, Box 8. The report, most likely drafted by Stypułkowski, provides a wealth of information about the various members of the Polish delegation, and the reactions of the Russian, Bulgarian, Czech, and East German delegates. The four-page appendix lists the titles of some 65 books in Polish, including translations of works by Djilas, Orwell, and Pasternak, and five Polish émigré periodicals, including *Kultura* and *Wiedomości*, distributed in Vienna. On the role of the CIA and of Sam Walker in Vienna, see “Gloria Steinem and the CIA,” *The New York Times*, February 21, 1967. Steinem was enrolled into the CIA in 1958 by Cord Meyer.

most of them taken by sailors, who were considered the main suppliers of black market products, including books, in Poland.<sup>15</sup>

Along with Austria, Sweden, which was also frequently visited by Poles, was the other missing link. EEI did not find a suitable candidate for program representative there, even though Stockholm had a fairly large Polish colony and was one of the closest and most frequently visited Western capitals. It was estimated that due to the special summer boat trips from Poland advertised for 1959, over 1,000 tourists would arrive to the ports of Malmö and Göteborg instead of the capital city, “due to the provocative behavior of American agents in Stockholm last year.”<sup>16</sup> Many delegations and individual travelers visited Sweden that year. When they were contacted—also in Norway or Switzerland, where there were no distribution points—books were mailed to them through British channels.

*Reception of the distribution program.* The actual impact of the book distribution program in Poland could tangibly be evaluated through the letters and postcards sent from Poland and through direct personal communication between the distributors and the recipients during the latter’s visits to the West. These reactions did not greatly differ from one another and fully confirmed the effectiveness and necessity of the operation. As distribution figures increased, so did the number of responses, letters, and opinions, both written and verbal. Contact persons received numerous confirmations of receipt and thank-you notes, most of them included in private correspondence. Program representatives in the field collected copies of the paragraphs dealing with the book distribution activities and forwarded them to the European Representative in London. Originals, together with the names and addresses of the recipients, were kept in a safe. Only the names of prominent recipients were mentioned in the monthly reports, while others were only identified by their profession or initials.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Monthly Report for February 1959, 1–2; Monthly Report for March 1959, 3; and Monthly Report for April 1959, 3. Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Monthly Report for March 1959, 2; Monthly Report for April 1959, 1. Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Monthly Report for December 1958, 1. Ibid.

In December 1958, the program was in no way hindered by the Polish authorities, and no confiscations of books were reported. Only one visitor with some “provocative books” collected in Paris had “some difficulties” at the border, but later confirmed by letter that the books “created a sensation in Poland.” Thereafter, Stypułkowski worked out a new system for his distribution policy to counteract any possible Polish communist interference or provocation. “This does not mean,” he wrote, “that the regime is aware of the extent of our operation—(no frontier confiscations were reported to us again!)—but precautionary moves are necessary in view of the general tendency to suppress freedom of expression in Poland. [...] It is simply our duty to fill the gap caused by the effects of the tightening of censorship and [the] difficulties in publishing new books [...]—as experienced by non-communist Polish writers nowadays.”<sup>18</sup> From time to time, some visitors would approach contact persons in the most direct manner, as if they were aware of the existence of a distribution scheme by which Western books could be obtained free of charge. This created a delicate situation, because it was difficult to ascertain whether that person was sent by someone who had benefited from the program before, or was acting as a regime “probe” in order to discover the network. Distributors were supposed to handle these cases with skill and diplomacy in order to meet the person’s wishes without fear of any grave consequences.<sup>19</sup>

The fear of strict customs examinations in the presence of militia functionaries upon their return to Poland was also on the mind of a number of book recipients. Because of the arrest and imminent trial of Mrs. Rewska, a distributor of the émigré periodical *Kultura*, more travelers avoided carrying it back to Poland. However, this did not apply to books published by *Kultura* or to other periodicals.<sup>20</sup> As could be expected, the reaction of cruise ship passengers, most of them high party members and privileged individuals, was a little cautious at first. But the appeal of the book titles and authors was greater than their fear, and they gratefully accepted the books and even discussed them among themselves after reading them. The Edinburgh distributor’s advice was to write personal dedications in each book to make them

<sup>18</sup> Monthly Report for January 1959, 1. Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Monthly Report for February 1959, 2. Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Monthly Report for December 1958, 2. Ibid.



appear as a personal gift. In fact, the majority of the recipients were not afraid of taking with them even the strongest political and anti-communist literature. "Certain individuals," Stypułkowski noted, "insist on choosing this kind of literature as a form of personal satisfaction in 'purposely damaging the prestige of the Communist State and its Soviet Master' as one young man put it."<sup>21</sup> In May of 1959, Zahorski reported from Rome that "The anti-communist book supplies of students in Gdańsk has been recently 'reinforced' through their 81-strong Academic Choir visiting Italy. They brought back to Poland over 120 volumes of our best selection." On the other hand, a few travelers from the older generation or a few more exposed officials refused to take back books that were obviously too political, such as Milovan Djilas's *The New Class*.<sup>22</sup>

Polish customs procedures were not always uniform. When the British Council mailed to Poland the many books given to an invited delegation of Polish professors and scientists visiting Britain, the Polish censors removed all political books from the consignment. A visitor to Paris reported that Polish customs made him pay duty on everything, including second-hand dresses, but failed to take notice of the books. A manager, who took a large collection of political books with him from London, wrote that he had to part with one book at the border in order to preserve the rest. In March and April, travelers reported no book confiscations, and EEI distributors assumed their books had safely reached Poland. A traveler whose car trunk was loaded with books reported that Polish customs showed no interest in them. "Customs officers at the frontier are preoccupied with individual interpretation and application of the rather confusing new Polish customs law, which incidentally does not forbid the import of foreign publications, nor even permits to impose any custom duty."<sup>23</sup> Indeed, as Stypułkowski observed: "The communist authorities were aware that books were being smuggled into the country by various channels but for reasons unknown to us, take no steps to prevent it. Our books

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<sup>21</sup> Monthly Report for April 1959, 4. Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Monthly Report for April 1959, 5, and Monthly Report for May 1959, 1 and 4. Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, the export of foreign books from Poland was not allowed. Monthly Report for March 1959, 1. Ibid.



are being read by ardent communists and Party members. A lady visitor from Poland told [...] that the District Secretary of the Party in Ciechanow was one of the keenest borrowers of books published in exile.”<sup>24</sup> With the approaching summer traffic of Polish visitors to West European countries, the communist authorities began to tighten controls over the issuing of passports and to scrutinize the purpose of their travel. Thus in the spring of 1959, the number of private and family visits dropped considerably, while the number of official or semi-official ones grew by 50%, together with that of officially organized foreign conducted tours.<sup>25</sup>

The Scottish distributor Stanisław Błaszczyk reported that the pamphlet “*Jak żyje nowa klasa w Polsce*” (“How the New Class in Poland Lives”) by Irena Świat-Ihnatowicz was very popular in Poland, with some people asking for two or even three copies. “Only on one occasion,” he said, “have I allowed one person to have two copies since I would not like to make the impression to the recipients of an organized distribution effort—especially that many of them have been ‘warned’ before leaving Poland about ‘American agents’ infiltrating the Polish emigration and visitors from Poland. People accept the books with a conviction that I am wealthy enough to make such presents. All books are of course given with my personal dedication.”<sup>26</sup> Members of a Polish motorcycle team racing in Scotland willing to take everything also requested and received two copies each of the pamphlet, which they read on the spot. Although some of them had heard about Ihnatowicz’s revelations on Radio Free Europe, they did not know the complete story. The Scottish distributor reported: “They told me that Świat-Ihnatowicz caused a lot of trouble in Poland by her disclosures. The government and Party officials were raving mad. A number of them got into serious trouble. [...] We were informed that Gomułka started an energetic purge among the ‘New Class’ and this news spread wide across the country. Everybody takes Gomułka as an example of a person of great modesty [...]”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Monthly Report for May 1959, 4–5. Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>26</sup> Monthly Report for April 1959, 5. Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Monthly Report for May 1959, 4. Ibid.

Stypułkowski's reports reveal many ingenious and delicate ways used to get Western books safely into Poland. Extensive use was made of carefully selected and trusted travelers, mainly artists, businessmen, and sportsmen, to willingly act as "book-carriers" each time they crossed the border. Once inside the country, parcels containing the books brought in by these people were posted in Poland and reached their destination within a few days. Frenchmen of Polish origin, holders of French passports, were also used in the same manner to transport books from France. Thanks to this method, it was possible to provide books to many schools, universities, hospital libraries, clubs, public institutions, and even government offices, where they would be available to a wider readership. This also allowed books to reach the provinces, and not only the big cities in Poland. It was also a safer way to meet requests for anti-communist books of a political, historical, and educational nature. A group of teachers and priests visiting Italy explained that because their baggage allowance was limited, they would carry the most suspicious books themselves, with the rest posted in their ingenious "patented" way, packing them in wrappers of parcels with books sent to them from Poland, with Polish stamps, inscriptions and all. They would then exchange the books and send the parcel back to Poland with a note "Addressee unknown—return to sender!"<sup>28</sup>

As already noted, sailors from Polish merchant and fishing ships were among the most active and effective book smugglers, thereby performing a double mission of sorts in enriching themselves by making high profits on the black market and by bringing Western ideas and culture into communist-ruled Poland. The December 2, 1958 issue of the local newspaper *Głos Szczeciński* (Szczecin voice) in Szczecin complained about the ineffectiveness of communist propaganda among Polish seamen and the inability of the weak Polish broadcasting stations to reach even the North Sea area, not to mention the Far East routes. At a Party committee session, Bolesław Bąbczyński, the captain of the ship *Szczecin*, said: "There is practically no political training on board ship. On my last trip to South East Asia I did not read a single Polish newspaper throughout the entire five months. The sailors just do not get them. I found Djilas's book *The New Class* pub-

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<sup>28</sup> Monthly Report for April 1959, 6. Ibid.

lished by Polish émigré circles and other publications hostile to our system. So there is need for political activity on board the ship [...].”<sup>29</sup>

The visitors showed a keen interest in, and an overwhelming appetite for, Western, and especially Polish, émigré publications. They were well informed about the extensive Polish book publishing efforts in exile and the possibility of receiving émigré books. These books, considered forbidden fruit, enjoyed a tremendous popularity in Poland and were sometimes requested in the most direct manner. The most coveted title was the Polish translation of Boris Pasternak’s *Dr. Zhivago*, also available in a French and an English translation, with over 150 copies entering Poland by the end of 1958. Copies of the French edition were delivered by a delegation of French Catholic intellectuals visiting Poland, and copies of the Russian edition were also requested, as the book was in great demand by visiting Russian artists. Other frequently requested titles included Milovan Djilas’s *The New Class*, Czesław Miłosz’s *The Captive Mind*, George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* and 1984, *Cambridge History of Poland*, General Władysław Anders’s memoirs *An Army in Exile, Poland at the Beginning of the Year 1958 (Polska na progu 1958 r.)* by Zbigniew Stypułkowski, and works by Tadeusz Nowakowski, Oskar Halecki, Stefan Korboński, Władysław Konopczyński, Marek Hłasko, Jozef Maria Bochenski, Tadeusz Bor-Komorowski, Raymond Aron, Albert Camus, and others, together with the regular issues of the émigré periodicals *Kultura* (Paris) and *Wiadomości* (London). A staff member of a literary institute in Krakow collected in the Polish Library in London political works by Miłosz, Hłasko, Mickiewicz, Bregman, and others before returning to Poland. All émigré publications dealing with pre-World War II Polish politics, Polish-Russian relations, Polish contemporary history, including military history and works on the Polish forces’ participation in World War II in Italy and elsewhere, were extremely popular. The same was

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<sup>29</sup> The books had been provided during one of the ship’s earlier calls to Scottish ports. Monthly Report for February 1959, 4–5. Ibid. *The Captive Mind* by Czesław Miłosz fetched at least 400 zlotys, Hłasko’s *Cemetaries* 250 to 300 zlotys, and political and historical literature was even more expensive. Black market prices eventually showed a declining trend because of the larger amount of copies circulating. Monthly Report for January 1959, 4. Ibid.

true for English textbooks and works on social and economic history, philosophy, political theory, British industry and agriculture, and American and British poetry.

To round out this account, here are a few of the most interesting and revealing reactions from Polish book recipients during the period covered by the reports. From a young lecturer of English in Warsaw: "[...] Your book (*Poland 1958*) is being read by my friends and colleagues who all agree that the analysis [of Poland's present situation] is correct [...]" From a student group leader from Warsaw: "Our return journey [from England] was simply wonderful [...] and we all reached our homes in safety! We are so grateful for your presents which were brought home to everyone's delight." From a leading journalist in Warsaw: "While Hemingway will be read by hundreds of thousands, your books would reach millions if allowed freely into the country. But even the few available will circulate continually up to their complete disintegration."<sup>30</sup>

From a member of a literary institute in Kraków: "You won't believe me but I feel like a most popular citizen of Kraków. The reason—your wonderful presents [meaning books] which have aroused a sensation here. Long forgotten friends now suddenly appear in my apartment and show a curiously profound interest towards my library. As much as I would like to guard my 'treasures,' I simply cannot resist their pleas and I have to lend them occasionally. Every time I have the impression that I am not going to get them back [...]" A librarian wrote: "What a joy, what a Christmas! All three parcels landed safely [...] I am so grateful and so happy that at last we got a few Polish books from the West, and not only in German and French, which are extremely valuable but inaccessible to larger audiences [...] We sincerely hope that somehow you will find a way to send us more of your publications. They are really so important here!" From the director of a sanatorium in northern Poland: "On behalf of the patients in our sanatorium I thank you from all my heart. We wish you all the success in your difficult task of representing the free Polish culture in exile."<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Monthly Report for December 1958, 3. Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Monthly Report for January 1959, 3–5. Ibid.

The head librarian of a Warsaw public library who received a number of political publications thanked for them and requested all publications in English that concerned Poland and Polish affairs. A lecturer from Kraków wrote: "Thank you so much for your wonderful gift. I don't remember if I told you that I am now making special study of contemporary philosophy and books such as *Handbuch des Weltkommunismus*, *American Philosophy*, *Ethical Sketches* are God-sent to me!" A student from Łódź, who received books by Djilas, Miłosz, and Orwell, wrote: "I have brought back the books home without difficulty. We are swallowing them passionately—strictly speaking they are being passed from hand to hand. They are treated as greatest rarities—in other words the best of bestsellers!" A student from Szczecin, who received works by Djilas, Miłosz, and Anders, said: "Once again many thanks for all [the] books. I had no trouble bringing them home. They are moving around with cosmic speed [...]" A student from Wrocław wrote: "Many thanks for your books [Orwell, Hłasko] which are being read, and read, and read, by tens, if not hundreds now [...]" A student from Wieliczka near Kraków, who got books by Djilas, Korboński, and Bór-Komorowski, wrote: "[...] all books which you have given me were safely brought into the country without any trouble. I must say—they are real smashers! All my friends are killing themselves to borrow and read. And those who read them are damn pleased [...]" Another student from Warsaw thanked for the books by Pasternak, Orwell, Majewski, and Stypułkowski "which are such a great success here [...]"<sup>32</sup>

The head librarian of a university wrote: "I wish to congratulate you on your magnificent edition of *Poland and her Heritage*. [...] Our lecturers and students are in great need of history textbooks, e.g. Konopczyński's *Modern History of Poland*, dictionaries, and language tuition textbooks. [...] I thank you wholeheartedly for everything you have done for us and wish you all the strength to endure the hardships of exile and a happy return home in better conditions [...]"<sup>33</sup> A law professor at the University of Poznań, who received a script entitled *The Outline of the British Constitution*, wrote: "I have read your

<sup>32</sup> Monthly Report for April 1959, 6–7. Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Monthly Report for February 1959, 6. Ibid.

script [...] and think it is important to have it published in the form of a book. What a pity that it is not possible to do this in Poland. A brochure published a few years ago in Poland on the same subject is the only publication in Polish which we can give to the students. After reading your script, I have included it in our library stock and have noticed that it is widely read.” When asked what kind of books they would like to get, visiting students told their Paris contacts: “We are interested in absolutely everything. Polish youth never read so much before as it is reading nowadays. We would like to read anything that has been published in exile—and especially what we cannot read in Poland.”<sup>34</sup>

A known journalist openly stated: “People in Poland await eagerly the return of visitors from France because of the news and interesting books they bring back home.” The editor of the Catholic weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny* (General weekly), who, in Paris, had received a copy of Florian Czarnyszewski’s novel *Losy pasierbów* (The stepson’s fate) about Polish emigrants in South America, wrote: “We wanted to print a review of your book but unexpected difficulties [meaning the censor] prevented us from doing so [...]” The author of the book *Wicher wolności* (Wind of freedom), Wacław Zagórski, alias Lech Grzybowski, received a letter from a recipient in Poland, who wrote: “How about a second edition of *The Wind*? It is absolutely a first class book which should be read by everyone in Poland and abroad [...]” A lady from Warsaw wrote about the same work: “I saw your book circulating among my friends but had no chance to get hold of it. The waiting list is miles long. Oh, please—could you spare me a copy?” And a journalist in Wrocław asked the author for a copy since he had only “one hour to read—and my children ought to read it either, to learn the whole truth.” A group of students from Poland asked for more books because the first batch “disappeared as soon as they opened their suitcases in Warsaw.” A scholar who received *Dr. Zhivago* and *Song of Bernadette* wrote: “Your priceless publications will serve not only me but a large group of friends as well [...] and will be treated as sensation! Your gift means so much to me, because I know now about your existence, about your willingness to help a lonely Polish scholar, about

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<sup>34</sup> Monthly Report for March 1959, 6–7. Ibid.

your understanding of our needs and desires [...].” A teacher bravely wrote: “This is the list of our requests. Please let us have as many as you can spare. Don’t let our children read these terrible communist textbooks [...].”<sup>35</sup> The Warsaw newspaper *Życie Warszawy* (Warsaw life) made a favorable mention of the *English-Polish and Polish-English Agricultural Dictionary* by L. Woronowicz published in London, and concluded that the author and the Association of Polish Farmers in Great Britain “by the publication of the new dictionary greatly helped towards [a] closer relationship and mutual understanding of Polish and British people.”<sup>36</sup>

Prominent regime officials also took advantage of the book program and benefited from it whenever an opportunity arose. According to Stypułkowski, “They present each time a different explanation of their interest in anti-communist literature. Their attitude is obviously dishonest and typically opportunist, but their choice of books consists usually of our best titles from the stockpile!”<sup>37</sup>

Well-known visitors who between December 1958 and May 1959 received books through the program included Prof. Tadeusz Kotarbiński, (1886–1981), President of the Polish Academy of Sciences (1957–1962), a leading Marxist and frequent visitor, who took a large number of historical, literary, and anti-communist titles and who flew to Warsaw with only the books in hand to avoid baggage overweight; Jerzy Zawiejski (1902–1969), actor and leading Catholic writer and a member of the Council of State, who asked that the French edition of *Dr. Zhivago* be mailed to his office address at the Sejm, where it reached him uncensored; Prof. Julian Hochfeld (1911–1966), delegate to the Peace Council and regime spokesman in scientific affairs, head of the Polish Institute of Foreign Affairs (1957–1959); Zygmunt Lichniak (1925–), journalist, and member of the PAX group; Eugeniusz Ajnenkiel (1900–1981), historian, Party functionary, and deputy chairman of the Economic and Planning Committee in the Sejm; Lucjan Wolanowski (1920–2006), editor of *Świat* magazine; Zbigniew Herbert (1924–1998), at that time a prominent young

<sup>35</sup> Monthly Report for May 1959, 5–7. Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Letter to John Kirk from A. Stypułkowski dated May 9, 1959, with the Polish article and its English translation attached. Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Monthly Report for April 1959, 4. Ibid.



poet and writer; Jan Wyka (1902–1982), well-known writer; Lucjan Kydryński (1929–2006), journalist and publicist, columnist of the Kraków weekly news magazine *Przekrój*; Mikołaj Rostworowski, PAX group journalist, editor of *Kierunki*; Stanisław Strumph-Wojtkiewicz (1898–1986), known poet, writer, and translator of Russian and Soviet literature; Jan Grudziński, vice minister of Forestry and Wood Industry; Leon Stankiewicz, head of the Railroad Department at the Ministry of Transport; Gustaw Gottesman (1918–1998), chief editor of *Przegląd Kulturalny* (Cultural overview) (1955–1963); Prof. Władysław Tatarkiewicz (1886–1980), philosopher; Prof. Bogdan Suchodolski, philosopher (1903–1992); Prof. Aleksander Gieysztor (1916–1999), historian; Prof. Roman Ingarden (1893–1970), philosopher; Dr. Piotr Skubiszewski (1931–), art historian; and Wiktor Kopaczewski, zoo director of the coastal district of Oliwa near Gdańsk.

The 14-page monthly report for May 1959 is the last found in the Sam Walker Collection, and most probably indicates the end of the reorganization of the Polish book distribution program under EEI aegis. By that time, one month before the end of the U.S. fiscal year, the Institute was experiencing some budgetary problems due to the program's growing rate of expenditure and the need to plan ahead for the Vienna Youth Festival. It duly informed Stypułkowski that it would agree only to a one-year lease for a new office in London. The latter's reaction was one of dismay: "We are now practically at the heat of summer season—and there comes the disaster! Please, Oh please! Do everything you can to have this ban [sic] lifted as soon as possible! We are harming the 'core' of the Program. Besides we are losing the confidence of our best distributors—the bookshops in London and Paris, where distribution was based on the 'of the shelf sales' [...]"<sup>38</sup> This was not, however, the end of the Polish book distribu-

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<sup>38</sup> Letter from Kirk to Stypułkowski dated May 28, 1959, and letter from Stypułkowski to Kirk dated June 4, 1959. Payments for expenditures incurred were made soon afterwards to five Polish distributors in Western Europe. Letters from Shirley Griffith to Stypułkowski dated July 17, 1959, and to Zofia Rita Zaremba dated August 3, 1959. Ibid, Box 9. Stypułkowski eventually returned to the Polonia Book Fund to become a publisher and book distributor in London for George Minden and Adam Rudzki.



tion program, which was soon reorganized under the aegis of the Press and Special Projects Division (PSPD) of the Free Europe Committee. More importantly, the program was successfully continued in the early 1960s under the direction of George Minden and Adam Rudzki, and soon enlarged with new distributors to supply hand-to-hand visitors from Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Bulgaria with Western political and other “sensitive” publications subject to confiscation by the communist regimes’ never idle censors. Thanks to covert CIA and FEC/PSPD financing, regular support for the numerous émigré book publishers and periodicals, as well as the mailing and person-to-person distribution of Western and émigré literature, would continue without interruption for the next three decades.

The special treatment accorded by the U.S. to Poland deserves a mention. American governmental agencies and private institutions such as the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and other organizations were actively involved in the country in the early 1960s, in the form of scholarships and travel grants for Polish officials educators and scientists and a variety of educational exchange programs and cultural and art exhibits. Since 1958, Poland alone had an Information Media Guarantee (IMG) Contract with the U.S. worth \$1.2 million, under which the USIA was able to provide a steady flow of American literary works and periodicals, films, music recordings, World Almanacs, and Sears Roebuck Catalogues. The allotted 30,000 copies of the magazine *Ameryka* were sold out within a day or two in Poland’s main cities, while the 10,000 copies of its counterpart *Poland* did not fare very well in the U.S. There were occasional problems with the Polish authorities about pricing and books on modern jazz, but on the whole, the IMG became one of the most effective cultural instruments the U.S. had in Poland.<sup>39</sup> But this issue requires additional research.

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<sup>39</sup> The agreement was reported by *Tygodnik Powszechny* on March 2, 1958. U.S. Embassy Warsaw Telegram to State Department, August 3, 1961. On April 14, 1961, the Embassy notified the USIA that “the volume of material presently being received is beyond distribution capabilities of Embassy and local staff. Local storage space limited. Please suspend shipments.” National Archives, College Park, MD, Box 2146 and Box 2198. On the IMG Program, see Richmond, *Practicing Public Diplomacy: A Cold War Odyssey*, 46–7.

## CHAPTER 12

# Another Vehicle for Reaching the People of Eastern Europe

### *The Person-to-Person Distribution Program and Personalized Mailings*

Because mailed books were subject to censorship, most of the books about international affairs and politics, as well as selected books with political impact about philosophy, religion, law, history, social sciences, economics, business, and labor, were distributed hand to hand to East European visitors to the West. This method was given the name “person-to-person distribution program.” This chapter is based on general data and selected accounts of hand-to-hand distribution to visitors from all the target countries of the book program. From the start, book distributors were to use an initial for each East European visitor and to avoid precise identification, to make sure the recipients would not get into trouble once they returned home.<sup>1</sup>

Because of its size, importance, and openness after 1956, Poland was the most significant East European target country of the Free Europe Committee’s book program. Accordingly, Polish visitors to the West were the first to benefit from the new book distribution method. In the first three quarters of 1957, an unprecedented number,

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<sup>1</sup> John Dunning to George Minden, November 30, 1964. HIA, George Minden Collection, Box 3. The FEC senior official asked Minden to instruct his “meeters-and-greeters” to take precautions to protect the identity of book recipients “to avoid contributing to their difficulties in the event of some future shift in the political wind.” The missing information with the full identification was to be supplied to New York on an attached slip of paper, and thus was well known to the program director, as shown by the numerous lists of names of the most important East European visitors to the West who took books back with them.

some 55,000 persons, from the satellite countries visited the West, the vast majority of whom were Poles. This provided an opportunity to directly deliver, without the hindrance of postal censorship, selected literature, including politically significant books and periodicals, to the recipients. On the other hand, only those granted exit visas could receive books in this fashion. At the end of the year, Free Europe Press (FEP) initiated a permanent system for the purpose of distributing by hand books of political impact to the Polish intelligentsia traveling to Western Europe.<sup>2</sup> Stockpiles of no more than 100 books supplied from a central stockpile in Munich were to be maintained in London and Paris, the two centers that attracted the greatest number of important visitors from Poland. Three types of literature were envisaged: books requested by the visitor, books selected by the two Polish FEP editors in New York and in Munich, and books published in Polish for this purpose under FEP sponsorship. The project would operate as a branch of the mailing project through a network of Polish cultural institutions, libraries, bookshops, publishing houses, clubs, and cultural associations. Among them were the Sikorski Institute in New York, the Kosciuszko Foundation, the Polish Library in London and in Paris, the Polish Youth Center in Paris, and the Polish YMCA in Geneva. Their number eventually reached 30 in London and 11 in Paris, and the two cities became the main publishing centers of Polish books outside Poland.<sup>3</sup>

As outlined in the preceding chapter, the initial Polish project ran from 1958 until the summer of 1959 under the aegis of the East Europe Institute under Sam Walker and John Kirk, in order to avoid any identification with the Free Europe Committee. Through a network of distribution points in London, Paris, Rome, Stockholm, Brussels, and Munich, it distributed over 1,000 books per month to East Europeans traveling in the West. After returning home, some recipients continued to request books to be sent to them by mail.<sup>4</sup> This program was followed

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<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 11 on the early Polish person-to-person distribution program, 1958–1959.

<sup>3</sup> FEP Project Schedule No. 218, Munich office. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Archives.

<sup>4</sup> Sam Walker, 1958 East Europe Institute memorandum, 1–2. HIA, Sam Walker Collection, Box 8.

by a special book distribution project targeting the East European and Soviet delegation members attending the communist-organized Seventh World Youth Festival held in Vienna from July 26 until August 4, 1959. Despite the lack of records up to 1963, the Polish person-to-person program was in fact never terminated, and it continued with success, as shown by a telling FEP office memo for the period 1958–1961. It noted: “The number of frontier confiscations is so negligible that one may assume a 100% successful transportation through the Iron Curtain. The position of our Program seems to be even more firmly established among the Polish intellectual and literary circles than it was last year [1960]. These circles,” the memo continued, “rely very much on the regular supply of our literature, and recognize the activities of Polish authors, translators, and publishers in the West as an important complement to their own literary achievements gained in the most difficult political circumstances. Although, quantitatively, the number of volumes penetrating Poland does not satisfy the demand of the general reading public (not more than 500 copies of each edition suitable for person-to-person distribution enter Poland, unless special circumstances demand greater supplies), the improvised lending system among our friends ensures fairly satisfactory circulation [...]”<sup>5</sup>

In August 1962, Minden extended the Polish person-to-person distribution program to Hungary by setting up additional book distribution centers and contracting selected local distributors—mainly exiles or second generation West Europeans of East European descent—in London, Paris, Munich, Vienna, and Rome, and in New York through Columbia University. 2,500 books and Hungarian exile publications were allocated for the first half of 1963. The program got off to a very good start, with visitors favoring books in Hungarian, as well as literary and political works. In 1962, a more modest distribution operation for East European and Baltic visitors was established in Stockholm, with

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<sup>5</sup> Unsigned and undated Polish person-to-person distribution report, probably drafted by George Minden in January 1962, 2. Polish editorial activities at the time of the report mentioned two titles completed and in the course of distribution (*Romek* and *Berlin Crisis*), two titles in the completion stage (*Neither War nor Peace* and *Shadows, Vol. 1, Europe*), as well as three titles in various stages of preparation (*The Soviet Bloc, United Europe, and Polish History*).

links to Finland and Estonia.<sup>6</sup> A Czechoslovak network in Vienna, Rome, London, and Paris was added in 1963, and Bulgarian and Romanian networks were started in 1965 in Vienna, Rome, and Paris. The largest by far of these distribution networks remained the Polish one, followed by the Hungarian and Czechoslovak. The statistics for the year 1963—9,708 titles sent in 108,711 copies—do not provide separate monthly figures for the person-to-person program. On the other hand, the nine monthly highlights reports available contain separate references to the program with partial figures, titles of books and periodicals distributed, city of distribution, and names of prominent and other visitors from Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. These reports clearly show the growing importance of the various distributors, whose increased personal contacts with East European visitors provided a wealth of information about the conditions in their respective countries. Distributors also reported their visitors' enthusiastic response and eagerness to take back a large number of the items, many of them of a political nature, offered to them.<sup>7</sup>

Very little is known about FEC activities at the Eighth World Youth Festival in Helsinki, held from July 28 until August 6, 1962. A special staff was to distribute publications during and after the festival among delegates from Europe, as well as from Africa, Latin America, and Asia. Books in Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, and Polish would be given only to Soviet bloc delegates, together with records, musical scores, fashion magazines, and books on art and architecture.

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<sup>6</sup> Hungarian person-to-person project, FEC President to Executive Committee, December 10, 1962, 1–2, and unsigned memo on Project #20 Scandinavian distribution, dated May 1, 1962, 15–16. To cover the costs of the Hungarian project and to meet the increased number of responses and requests, Minden asked for a 10% increase of funds for eight months starting November 11, 1962. Unsigned COB memo dated October 15, 1962. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 231.

<sup>7</sup> Memoranda from George C. Minden to The President [FEC], April [1963] Highlights, dated May 6, 1963, 4; May [1963] Highlights, dated June 6, 1963, 4; July [1963] Highlights, dated August 7, 1963, 4; September [1963] Highlights, dated October 4, 1963, 5–7; October [1963] Highlights, dated November 8, 1963, 5–7; November [1963] Highlights, dated December 6, 1963, 4; PSPD Mailing Operations, Highlights Report, HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Microfiche Provisional Box 3.

Copies of FEC's magazine *East Europe* were to be shipped to Helsinki and Stockholm. Four main channels of distribution were named: information centers, hand-to-hand distribution, mailing, and other means such as distribution in hotels and conference rooms.<sup>8</sup>

Since the inception of the Hungarian program between August 1962 and December 1963, 5,900 books and 6,500 periodicals had been given out to Hungarian visitors. Visitors from Poland received some 4,500 books in 1963, and those from Czechoslovakia some 500. Distribution usually fell during the winter months, and rose during the summer months due to the increase in the number of visitors, and some of them received literature at more than one distribution point. *Kultura* in Paris regularly mailed books in Polish and copies of *Kultura* to merchant seamen stopping in Western ports such as Antwerp, Amsterdam, and Le Havre, and copies of *Kultura* were mailed to Poles in Havana. The crew of a Polish ship in Port Said requested books to be forwarded to Istanbul, their next port. The manager of a firm supplying Polish ships regularly gave *Kultura* and other Polish-language publications to Polish seamen. Two Polish travel agencies in London were handing out issues to passengers going to Poland. Polish visitors who received books while in Western Europe reported that they were not questioned about the books when re-crossing the border into Poland. Veritas, the Polish Catholic publishing house in London, acted as a sponsor and provided Polish bishops in Rome with books during the Vatican Council. When returning to Poland from the Council, Polish clergymen took so many books that these were openly stacked in the compartments of their train. The Czech delegation to the Vatican Council took 20 suitcases of books and had to pay \$800 for excess weight on the airplane. A five-page appendix lists the names of 155 Hungarian visitors who received books in London, Paris, Rome, and Vienna. 141 books were given out as gifts of the International Writers Fund to East European delegates at the International P.E.N. conference in Reims in October. Members of the MTK and FTC Budapest

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<sup>8</sup> The President [FEC] to The Executive Committee, Publications Project for Helsinki Youth Festival, May 24, 1972. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records. Visitors from the USSR are mentioned here for the first time. The letter gives the name of the Finnish staff manager and two addresses in Helsinki and four in Stockholm to which the publications were to be delivered.

football teams, a Hungarian boxing team, the Rajkó Gypsy Orchestra, a Hungarian parliamentary delegation, and a representative of Kultura also took books back with them to Hungary.<sup>9</sup>

Starting with the 1964 statistics, Minden added the monthly person-to-person totals to the monthly total of responses and requests received as a result of the mailings, covering both books mailed and books given directly to visitors from Eastern Europe. The person-to-person program proved to be extremely successful, with roughly 23,400 copies given out in 1963, 44,000 in 1964, 62,300 in 1965, 61,900 in 1966, and 87,600 in 1967. In this manner, it was possible to know with certainty that the books offered had actually been taken by the visitors who came to the various distribution points. Of the 44,075 items distributed person-to-person in 1964, roughly 2,100 each were taken by visitors from Hungary and Poland, and 2,573 by visitors from Czechoslovakia. The report gives the 1964 breakdown by categories of books received and by profession of the individuals who received person-to-person copies, with professors, teachers, writers, clergymen, and students making up the majority of the Polish and Hungarian recipients. In January 1964, books and periodicals were distributed at the Winter Olympic Games in Innsbruck to Hungarian and Czechoslovak participants. The latter received 348 copies of the *Look* and *Time Magazine* Kennedy memorial issues, the FEC magazine *East Europe*, and the émigré book *Československo* published in Washington, D.C. In cooperation with the Institute for International Education (IIE), the IAC presented 40 coupons worth \$10 in books at the Grand Central Paperback Bookshop in New York to visiting East European scholars.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Highlights Report April 1963, dated May 6, 1963, 2; Highlights Report October 1963, dated November 8, 1963, 3; and Highlights Report December 1963, dated January 10, 1964, 4, *ibid.* A retired Polish merchant marine captain recently told in Warsaw that Kultura's Jerzy Giedroyc was shipping books to his ports of call in West Africa. The captain believed that the books were gifts from Giedroyc, and praised his generosity. He had no idea that the books were financed by the CIA through IAC/ILC in New York. Marek Rudzki to the author, August 22, 2010.

<sup>10</sup> PSPD Book Center, Monthly Report No. 101, December 1964, 1, 5, and 4. The Czech representative could give out only 60% of his material because of Soviet delegation protests and the efforts of the Austrian police



The person-to-person distribution program continued to grow during 1965, with a total of 62,278 books and periodicals. These books were distributed to roughly 30,000 visitors from Poland, 26,000 from Hungary, and 6,500 from Czechoslovakia. More than half of the publications given out were about politics and recent history, many of them anti-communist émigré periodicals in the native language of the recipients. 1,000 copies of the Polish émigré journal *Wiadomości* were smuggled into Poland with a large shipment of books that had already been cleared by the authorities. 30 athletes and nine journalists received books at the Ice Hockey World Championship in Tampere, Finland. One French distributor reported that Polish sportsmen attending sports events in France took books primarily to sell them in Poland. In October, 300 musicians and singers of a Czech orchestra in Rome received some 1,200 booklets, and a group of 70 Czech tourists were also given books. In Rome, a total of 3,054 books were distributed between August and December to 699 clergymen from Eastern Europe attending the Vatican Ecumenical Council. Czechoslovak distribution in Vienna expanded by obtaining the cooperation of the Jungbrunnen Verlag, the publishing house of the Austrian Socialist Party.

March 1965 was marked by the initiation of yet another method of book distribution, named “personalized delivery” and “personalized mailing.” This method was already advocated in the late 1950s by U.S. government agencies, which felt that American scholars would have a greater intellectual impact on intellectual circles in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe than U.S. officials. With the help of the Committee on International Exchange of Persons, the Conference Board of Associated Research Councils in Washington, D.C., and PSPD’s cover organization, the International Advisory Council, an already existing fictitious corporation in New York, Minden began to provide books and periodicals to American professors, students, and journalists who were visiting or studying in Eastern Europe for dis-

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to prevent the dissemination of political publications. February [1964] Highlights, dated March 6, 1964, 4. Ibid. In 1965, the IIE and IAC cooperated to provide each East European student at the IIE foreign student department with a \$25 allowance to purchase books at Barnes & Noble in New York, with IAC paying the bill. February [1965] Highlights, dated March 5, 1965, 9.



tribution to selected East Europeans. After their return to the U.S., further books would be mailed to the East European contacts, with the Americans as the ostensible donors. 489 books were distributed in this manner from March until December 1965 to selected individuals in the five East European target countries, and Minden planned to further expand this method. He was aware, however, that this was the method over which he had the least amount of control, since the initiative came from American professors and specialists who wished to mail books to East Europeans.<sup>11</sup>

Minden's annual report for 1966 listed a total of 61,911 books distributed person-to-person, with Polish visitors to the West receiving 32,215 books and periodicals, Hungarian visitors 21,820, and Czech and Slovak visitors 7,497. The Romanian program got off to a slow start, with 82 books given out by the end of June, and 238 by the end of the year. The infant Bulgarian program registered even less: 47 books by the end of June and 111 by the end of the year. Personalized mailings and deliveries amounted to 1,899 books to some 700 individuals—a 300% increase over the 489 distributed in 1965. One-third of all books distributed dealt with politics, communism, and international affairs. The Paris Kultura publishing house started to reprint politically important articles from its magazine in pamphlet form on thin paper for both mailing and person-to-person distribution. Polish channels were expanded when the Nansen Haus in Vienna, operated by the Association of Poles in Austria, became active in handing out books to Poles visiting the city. Distribution was intensified in

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<sup>11</sup> G. Minden, Undated Report for 1965 on PSPD's Book Distribution Program, 1–11. HIA, Minden Collection, Box 1. See also PSPD Monthly Highlights from G. Minden to President [FEC] for the months January, February (on *Wiadomości*, 3), March (on Jungbrunnen, 11), April (on Polish sportsmen, 12), May (on Latvian program, 12), September, October, November (on Pilinszky, 13), and December 1965 (on the Vatican Council, 15). HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Microfiche Provisional Box 3. On "personalized" distribution and mailings, see PSPD memo to FEC President dated September 9, 1965, 1. PSPD's book distribution program is also described in a December 17, 1965 memorandum from the FEC President to the Executive Committee, 1–10. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Microfilmed Records of the Office of the FEC President, Reels 3–4.

Switzerland and in provincial France, and a new reading room for visiting Poles was established in the Polish Library in Paris. A new channel for Czechoslovak distribution was set up in Paris, and operations in Vienna and Rome were augmented. Accademia Cristiana Cecoslovacca, the main distributor in Rome, set up a reading room for Czech visitors to encourage their visits. In addition to its own publications, mainly Catholic pamphlets, it also started to distribute large quantities of books supplied by PSPD. Because they were more subject to censorship when mailed, many books written in Hungarian and even more Hungarian émigré periodicals were distributed to Magyar visitors. PSPD also tried to organize outlets for person-to-person book distribution to visiting Latvians with the cooperation of the Latvian Veteran Organization in Stockholm and the Latvian Reconstruction Committee in London. The report also listed 105 American professors and students who personally carried about 1,900 books to approximately 700 individuals in Eastern Europe—a 300% increase over 1965. 435 of these books were taken to Czechoslovakia and 381 to Poland.<sup>12</sup>

PSPD's person-to-person distribution in 1967 amounted to 87,568 books and periodicals, a 41% increase over 1966. 36% of the literature given out dealt with international affairs, politics, and law (47% in the case of Hungary), 29% with history, religion, philosophy, economics, social science, and education, and 22% with literature, language, arts, and architecture. Over 20 Western titles were distributed in connection with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Russian revolution, and six titles related to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Poles visiting the West received 43,658 items (a 36% increase over 1966), Hungarians

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<sup>12</sup> G. Minden, undated PSPD Annual Report for 1966 on the Book Distribution Program, 1–9, plus five appendixes. The report also mentions 105 American professors and students who personally carried about 1,900 books to Eastern Europe. See also PSPD Book Center Monthly Report No. 114, January 1966; No. 115, February 1966; No. 116, March 1966; No. 117 April 1966; No. 118 May 1966; No. 119 June 1966; and PSPD Memos from G. Minden to FEC President, February [1966] Highlights, dated March 9, 1966; March [1966] Highlights, dated April 11, 1966; April [1966] Highlights, dated May 11, 1966; May [1966] Highlights, dated June 14, 1966; and June [1966] Highlights, dated July 1966. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Microfiche Provisional Box 3.

25,962, Czechs and Slovaks 15,369 (twice as many as in 1966), and Romanians 1,747, a sharp increase over the 238 books given out in 1966. In December 1967, new Bulgarian distribution points in Munich (since March) and in Vienna (since October) gave out 111 books to Bulgarian visitors, the same number as during the entire year 1966. More Bulgarian visitors were expected in Vienna as a result of a recent agreement between Austria and Bulgaria, which allowed unrestricted travel without a visa between the two countries. There were many requests for Svetlana Alliluyeva's *Twenty Letters to a Friend*, Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago*, and Djilas's *The New Class*. A student reported that *Dr. Zhivago* had been translated into Bulgarian, reproduced in mimeographed form, and was now secretly being sold in Bulgaria, mainly to students. 54 books were given to Latvians in London and, for the first time, 171 books to Lithuanians. Personalized mailings to Poland rose from 525 in 1966 to 824 in 1967, and those to Czechoslovakia from 495 to 692.<sup>13</sup>

New Polish distribution centers included the Jungbrunnen bookstore in Vienna and the Polish YMCA in Geneva, headed by the banker Zygmunt Kallenbach (1901–1988), a very active and successful book mailer for many years. Since 1966, Polish visitors also received books from Kazimierz Knap at the Nansen Haus in Vienna, and from Jerzy Jankowski of the Union of Polish Federalists in several provincial French cities and in West Germany. New Czechoslovak distribution points included the Arts and Crafts Arcade in London, set up by the International Book Fellowship (IBF), a PSPD sponsor for mailings. The Arcade initiated a new practice that was adopted by all book distributors who worked through bookstores. It offered to lend, rather

<sup>13</sup> G. Minden, Undated PSPD Annual Report for 1967 on the Book Distribution Program, 1–33, plus five appendixes. See also PSPD Book Center Monthly Reports No. 126, January 1967; No. 127, February 1967; No. 140, March 1967; No. 129, April 1967; No. 130, May 1967; No. 131, June 1967; No. 132, July 1967; No. 133, August 1967; No. 134, September 1964; No. 136, November 1967; and No. 137, December 1967. See also PSPD Memo from G. Minden to FEC President, Highlights Report for January–February 1967, dated March 17, 1967; March–April dated May 10, 1967; May–June 1967 dated July 18, 1967; July–August 19967 dated September 10, 1967; September–October 1967, dated November 10, 1967; and November–December 1967, dated January 18, 1968 (on Bulgaria, 25). Ibid.

than to give away, books to Czechs, Slovaks, and other East European visitors with the understanding that there would be no problem if the borrowed books were not returned. Occasionally, some of the visitors who took books to read while in the West returned them to the distributors, gave them to friends living abroad, or discarded them before returning home, because they felt it was too dangerous to take them with them. In this way, when questioned about their contacts in the West, they could say that bookstores had libraries with books they lent out. Another new Czech outlet was the Velehrad Center in London, run by a Czech priest, Father Lang. Another priest, the Rev. Karel Fort in Munich, began to distribute books to Czechs visiting Germany. The Accademia Cristiana Cecoslovacca gave out books, not only in Rome but also through its representatives, to Czechoslovak visitors in Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, and Switzerland. In Vienna, the Herold Verlag distributed books in German and Czech, and the Österreichische Gesellschaft für Literatur in Vienna established contacts with Czechoslovak writers visiting the city. Books were distributed to Czechs attending various conferences and international events, in two instances inside Czechoslovakia itself.

In April 1967, at a conference held in Marienbad on the dialogue between Christians and Marxists, sponsored by the Paulus Society of West Germany in cooperation with the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, some 420 books were given out to 30 Czech and 15 other East European participants. At the Congress of Historians in Bratislava, the Jungbrunnen bookstore exhibited books and gave out 224 books on politics and history to 53 Czechs and 15 Hungarians. Other events included the World Hockey Championship in Vienna in March 1967; Expo 67, the Montreal World Fair; the second Congress *Historiae Slavicae* in Salzburg; the Alpbach Forum in Alpbach, Austria, where 35 East Europeans took 268 books; and three more conferences in Linz and in Vienna, respectively. Romanian visitors received books at the Carol I Foundation headed by Constantin Cesianu, Libella in Paris, the Jungbrunnen bookstore in Vienna, and the Arts and Crafts Arcade in London. Several Western publishers (PSPD sponsors) participated at a book exhibit on linguistics at the 10<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Linguists held in Bucharest between August 27 and September 2, 1967. After the closing of the exhibit, the books remained the property of the Organizing Committee, which donated them to the Romanian

Academy or university libraries in Romania. With PSPD backing, Hachette in Paris, Longmans and Green & Co. in London, and two bookstores in Munich provided some 50 books in English, French, and German. An American-Lithuanian basketball team, which visited Lithuania to play against Lithuanian teams, distributed 160 books, all Lithuanian works published in the West, to some 54 artists, writers, and students they met there.<sup>14</sup>

In 1968—which Minden called “the best year”—PSPD was able to distribute a total of close to 328,000 books and periodicals to over 70,000 individuals and institutions. Of these, 109,049 were given out to East European visitors to the West, a 24.5% increase over 1967. Because books and periodicals that dealt with politics were liable to be stopped by the censors, two-thirds (62.7%) of the books on politics and international affairs were distributed person-to-person rather than mailed. Through an arrangement with Dr. Günther Nenning, the Vienna representative of the Paulus Gesellschaft in Freilassing, Bavaria, the distribution of books and periodicals on politics, philosophy, and theology for all visitors from Eastern Europe started in the Society’s reading room in Vienna. A London distributor wrote: “The most wonderful part of this job is witnessing the tremendous happiness of hundreds of people starved of many kinds of literature when they are able to browse through Interpress’s wide range and select the books they want free of charge. Some spend hours poring over the books to choose only a handful.” Personalized mailings amounted to 4,440, with 1,499 books mailed to Poland, 1,363 to Czechoslovakia, 587 to Bulgaria, 474 to Hungary, and 467 to Romania. An American graduate student in Finland distributed 50 books and magazines among visiting Estonians.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> PSPD Annual Report for 1967 (on Poland, 20–1, on Czechoslovakia, 25–7). On Minden’s new “book lending” approach and books distributed in Lithuania, see November–December [1967] Highlights, dated January 10, 1968, 17–18. On the Bucharest Congress of Linguists, see Highlights Report September–October 1967, 12. Constantin Cesianu (1913–1983) was a former Romanian Ambassador to France.

<sup>15</sup> Undated PSPD Annual Report for 1968 on the Book Distribution Program, 1–21, plus four appendixes. HIA, Minden Collection, Box 1. On the Paulus Gesellschaft, see January–February [1968] Highlights, dated March 14, 1968, 21. The initial cost for PSPD was \$980. On Interpress, see November–December 1968, dated January 15, 1969, 22.

Polish visitors took back 47,555 publications from the many distribution points in West Europe: the Librairie Polonaise, Libella, and Galerie Lambert in Paris; Esperienze Internazionali in Rome; a number of Polish associations and cultural groups, and a Polish travel agency, in London, Gloucester, and Manchester; and Jerzy Jankowski of the Union of Polish Federalists in both France and Germany. 400 books were given out to about 100 Poles at the Winter Olympic Games in Grenoble, France, and about 100 books to Polish participants at the International Philosophical Congress in Vienna. Several hundred books were distributed to Polish bishops and priests in Rome, particularly during Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński's visit to the Vatican.<sup>16</sup>

In the case of Czechoslovakia, person-to-person distribution reached an all-time high after the August Warsaw Pact invasion, with 28,713 books given out, an 86% increase over 1967. This was due to the large number of tourists stranded in the West due to the invasion, with students making up between a quarter and a half of all recipients each month. Distribution points included the Munich representative of the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences in America, Dr. Antonín Kratochvíl; the Librairie Payot in Lausanne and Professor László Nagy in Geneva; Dr. Péter Gosztönyi in Bern; and *Svědění* and the Librairie Polonaise in Paris. The St. Methodius Association of Vienna, an organization of Austrian Catholics of Czech origin, provided a library and a reading room for visiting Czechoslovaks. Hungarian visitors received 25,164 books, almost the same number as in 1967. The most important Hungarian distribution centers continued to be Vienna: the Österreichische Gesellschaft für Literatur, as well as the Europa Haus and its director, Dr. József Varga (1923–1998). A group of 14 Hungarian teachers visiting Rome took a total of 146 books and 66 periodicals, and books were distributed in Vienna to members of the Madrigal Choir of Budapest and a group of 18 mining engineers from Tatabánya. New centers were set up in 1968 in Stockholm and Göteborg under the supervision of József Molnár of *Új Látóhatár*, PSPD's distributor in Munich. Book distribution to Hungarian visitors to Yugoslavia was initiated through the sale at

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<sup>16</sup> Undated PSPD Annual Report for 1968 on the Book Distribution Program, 11–20.

a token price of some 250 copies of Hungarian émigré works supplied by Molnár to the Forum publishing house in Novi Sad and in Subotica, Vojvodina.

2,499 books and periodicals were distributed to Romanian visitors in Paris, Vienna, and London, a 43% increase over 1967. The Arts and Crafts Arcade was visited by many Romanians, most of them students who asked for books on literature and art. Some returned with friends, and some gave the names of friends in Romania who wished to receive books by mail (one gave a list of 15 students at a language school). 1,500 Romanians were expected in the next few months to visit two large travel agencies in Vienna. According to the Jungbrunnen bookstore, it was almost as difficult to contact Romanian groups, as it was Soviet groups, since the groups always stayed together. Jungbrunnen planned to distribute a short guide to the city with a letter inviting the Romanian tourists to visit the bookshop and get other free books. As more Romanians were allowed to travel to the West, distribution to them became increasingly successful. In October, the Carol I Foundation asked for an increased supply of books to replenish its stocks depleted by its many summer visitors. PSPD sent them 600 books. Bulgarian visitors in Vienna, Munich, Frankfurt, and since February also in Paris received 4,556 books, against only 367 in 1967. Several unnamed Bulgarian government officials visited Munich and took 38 books, including works by Ladislav Mňačko and Andrei Siniavsky. Vienna was the closest place Bulgarians could visit, and recipients there included two groups of 25 folk dancers from the Sofia radio and television, and 20 members of the city's Spartak basketball club. *Dr. Zhivago*, *The New Class*, and copies of *Der Spiegel* and *Svoboden Narod*, a Bulgarian monthly published in Vienna, were in great demand. A bus tour of 86 intellectuals and government officials took 48 books and magazines, as well as some jazz records. At the 2–9 September Philosophy Congress in Vienna, nine top Bulgarian philosophers received a total of 44 books, and a group of 300 party and government functionaries, students, and intellectuals who came by steamer for a week's visit took 110 political books, 50 copies of *Svoboden Narod*, and 45 German magazines. A group of 30 physicians and their families received 20 books, and the chief editor of BTA, the state news agency, received works by Pasternak, Svetlana Alliluyeva, Mňačko, and Sinyavski. A Lithuanian journalist and a theatre director



received 80 books in London, mainly by Lithuanian émigré writers and Lithuanian periodicals published in the West. The chairman of the Latvian Veterans Association in Stockholm distributed 82 Latvian books, published in New York and provided by PSPD, to 54 visiting Latvians, including official delegations, basketball players and boxers attending international competitions, Latvian sailors in Sweden, or to Swedes visiting relatives in Latvia.<sup>17</sup>

Because of the serious difficulties created by the need to work out new financial arrangements for Free Europe, Inc., 1969 was not a good year. PSPD expected to operate with only 70% of the money it received in 1968. The book program contracted, with a 13.4% reduction of its budget as compared to 1968. The price of books also rose by 10%, and the number of books and periodicals had to be cut back due to the end of the subsidies paid to a number of East European émigré magazines. Many thousand copies of these periodicals, until then received free of charge, now had to be paid for by the New York Book Center. This reduction was partly offset by gifts of books by the USIA. 104,630 books and periodicals were distributed person-to-person, only 4% less than in 1968, and 3,999 books were sent as “personalized” mailings in the name of American professors and experts to their academic colleagues in Eastern Europe. 1,282 books went to Czechoslovaks, 1,402 to Poles, 712 to Romanians, 468 to Hungarians, 396 to Bulgarians, 94 to Lithuanians, and five to Latvians. Because of

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 14, 16. See also PSPD Book Center Monthly Reports No. 138, January 1968; No. 139, February 1968; No. 140, March 1968; No. 141, April 1968; No. 142, May 1968; No. 143, June 1968; No. 144, July 1968; No. 145, August 1968; No. 146, September 1968; No. 147, October 1968; No. 148, November 1968; No. 149, December 1968. See also PSPD Memo from G. Minden to FEC President, Highlights Report for January–February 1968, dated March 14, 1968 (on Bulgaria and Latvia, 25); March–April 1968, dated May 19, 1968 (on Romania, Bulgaria, and Lithuania, 22); May–June 1968, dated July 12, 1968 (on Bulgaria, 26); September–October 1968, dated November 11, 1968; and November–December 1968, dated January 15, 1969. Next to Czechs, the Arts and Crafts Arcade in London was also beginning to attract Romanian and Bulgarian visitors. HIA, REF/RL Corporate Records, Microfiche Provisional Box 3.



regime censorship, the bulk (82.2%) of the books dealing specifically with politics and international affairs, and 70% of the some 18,500 newspapers and periodicals, often with a strong political content, were distributed person-to-person.<sup>18</sup>

41,599 books and periodicals were handed out to Polish visitors at some 30 distribution points in Great Britain, France, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Belgium, and Luxemburg. In Germany, distribution of Polish books was expanded to the Ruhr area, Hamburg, Bonn, Cologne, Frankfurt, and Mannheim. Books were also given to persons of Polish descent to distribute in Poland when visiting there. Czechoslovak visitors took 30,063 books, some 1,350 more than in 1968, offsetting the decrease in the number of books mailed and requests received as a result of the increasingly conservative climate in that country. Thus, 46.5% of all books distributed to Czechoslovakia were given person-to-person, as compared to 36.4% in 1968. 42% the total person-to-person distribution dealt with politics and international affairs. Visitors received books at 28 distribution points in Austria, England, France, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, and in New York. New travel restrictions came into force in October, according to which all Czechs and Slovaks abroad had to return to Czechoslovakia by the end of the year, regardless of the terms of their exit visas, or they had to apply for new permits at their consulates. Nevertheless, group excursions organized by the ČEDOK tourist agency continued, and people were still coming in groups.

Hungarians received 21,258 books and periodicals from individual book distributors in Vienna (the Europa Haus and Dr. Gyula Klamár, editor of *Magyar Híradó*); Rome and the Vatican (Zsuzsanna Triznya and Father Ferenc Szabó, at the Society of Jesus [S.J.]); Paris (László Marton, and afterwards Gyula Sipos); Munich (József Molnár); London (Loránd Czigány, and afterwards Mátyás Sárközi); and New York (Dr. György Löwy and Alajos Papp at the Butler Library of Columbia University). Romanian person-to-person distribution rose from 2,499 publications in 1968 to 4,499 a year later, yet it remained

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<sup>18</sup> George C. Minden, Free Europe, Inc., PSPD, Office of the Director, undated Annual Report Calendar Year 1969 on the Book Distribution Program, 1–13. Appendix 2 (1–13) lists the most important book recipients in 1969, and Appendix 4a (1–8) lists selected political titles distributed in 1969.

a small part of the Romanian book project because few Romanians were allowed to travel abroad. They were also more careful in their choice of books, preferring literary works to political ones. They were particularly pleased to pick up copies of the Bible in Romanian, which they said had long been out of print in Romania. The main distribution points remained the Carol I Foundation in Paris, which again was short of books and sent a list of 61 titles to replenish its stock. Other Paris distributors were Libella and the Librairie Polonaise (with 30 Romanian visitors monthly), Esperienze Internazionali in Rome, the Arts and Crafts Arcade of Interpress, Ltd. in London, and the Jungbrunnen bookstore in Vienna. The latter noted that practically no individual Romanians visited them, and that almost all contacts were with group tours. Bulgarian visitors received 7,091 books, an encouraging 43% increase over 1968, and 62% of what they took dealt with politics and international affairs. The share of person-to-person distribution in the overall Bulgarian project rose from 18.4% to 33%. Vienna remained the most important distribution center, with several large organized groups arriving by rail, boat, and bus throughout the year, especially during the summer. Individual field representatives also gave books to Bulgarians in Munich, Frankfurt, and Paris. Visitors in Vienna included 80 teachers who arrived by boat on a Danube tour arranged by the Bulgarian Teachers' Union, and participants at the Vienna medical congress. Some 200 economists, enterprise managers, and state and party officials attending the Vienna Economic Fair between October 25 and November 5, 1968, received 132 books, including works by Djilas, Mňačko, Alliluyeva, Pasternak, Sinyavsky, and Solzhenitsyn. A 31-strong Komsomol group was given 41 books, a group of 12 musicians took 15 books, and 18 migrant farm workers on their way home from Czechoslovakia received 72 books while passing through Vienna. Six groups totaling 225 persons visited Paris in the summer months, taking many political books. A group of 68 tourists visited Frankfurt am Main in December and received a total of 108 books. The Baltic person-to-person distribution operated at a very low level, with 118 Latvians and 2 Lithuanians receiving books in 1969.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 15–18 on Poland and Czechoslovakia, 20 on Hungary, 22 on Romania, 24 on Bulgaria and the Baltic Republics. On Polish book distribution in Germany, see Highlights Report September 1969, dated October

Due to the tense political situation in Poland, intellectuals were issued passports only on a selective basis. One visitor reported that the authorities had revived an order dating from Stalinist times, forbidding state employees traveling abroad to have contacts with foreigners except in the company of at least one other Pole. Despite this, Polish employees of and delegates to international organizations in Geneva received books, and half a dozen Poles as well as Czechs and Slovaks, including many students, used the reading room of the *Librarie Polonaise* in Paris every day. In July, a team of 75 Polish athletes who visited Paris received 89 books and magazines, including *Kultura*, and many works in Polish. In London, all 65 members of the choir of the University of Poznań received a Polish guide to the capital city. A group of 33 Poles took 60 books at the Jungbrunnen bookstore in Vienna. Large Czechoslovak groups (38 and 45 tourists, 28 textile workers, 30 food industry workers, 40 metal workers, and 26 communications workers) also received many books and émigré newspapers there. In Rome, books were distributed at a new hostel for Czechoslovak visitors that opened at the Nepomucenum College. The orchestra and chorus of Radio Prague, 200 persons, gave a concert in Rome and left with the words: "Please do not forget us."<sup>20</sup> Large groups of Hungarian tourists, hospital workers, teachers, and students numbering over 199 persons were given a total of 185 books and periodicals in Vienna, and many groups of Hungarian tourists from provincial towns such as Szolnok, Miskolc, and Szentgotthárd continued to receive books there. A Hungarian delegation to an Italian film festival took 70 books and 34 periodicals, many of them works by Hungarian émigrés in the West. During the Budapest International Trade Fair in May 1969, Austrian truck drivers took some 300 copies of the émigré paper *Magyar Híradó*, published in

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6, 1969, 5. Polish book distribution in Germany was under the coordination of Jerzy Jankowski, chairman of the Union of Polish Federalists in France, in cooperation with the Union of Poles in Germany. On new Czechoslovak travel regulations, see Highlights Report October 1969, dated November 7, 1969, 9. One Vienna distributor reported: "Tourist groups keep arriving. Every Saturday up to ten buses from Czechoslovakia can be seen on the Prater." December [1969] Highlights, dated December 5, 1969, 11, and December [1969] Highlights, dated January 7, 1970, 11.

<sup>20</sup> Highlights Report December 1969, dated January 7, 1970, 11.

Vienna, into Hungary for distribution. A boatload of 175 Bulgarians received books in Vienna, and six Bulgarian groups totaling 225 persons were given books in Paris. Six Bulgarian Communist Party instructors attending the Congress of Historians in Linz, Austria, asked for a total of 13 books, all on politics, to be mailed to their home addresses. Two Bulgarian bishops, in Vienna for medical check-ups, took books on Czechoslovakia as well as works by Djilas and Andrei Sakharov. In response to a request from a playwright in Vilnius, two books of modern plays were given to a visitor from Lithuania in New York. A total of 110 books and periodicals were given to 15 Czech and Slovak and eight Hungarian participants at the 1969 Alpbach Forum in Austria.<sup>21</sup>

Following the separation of his Press and Special Projects Division from Free Europe, Inc. in July 1970, and the ensuing division of his budget, Minden switched from annual to semi-annual reports on his book program. The first report covering the first half of 1970 was still sent to Free Europe, along with a Highlights Report for January–February 1970, and two lengthy Statistical Reports for January–February 1970 and July–August 1970. In his successive semi-annual reports, Minden compared the results not with those of the previous calendar year, but with those of the preceding half-year. Due to the absence from the Minden Collection of any further Highlights Reports, there is much less detailed information about the activities of the numerous book distributors in Western Europe, with the sole exception of Romania. Because of a much smaller operating budget, the number of books distributed person-to-person in the first half of 1970 dropped, with the exception of Bulgaria, to 40,999 books and periodicals. Of these, 15,634 or 38.1% were about international affairs

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<sup>21</sup> Free Europe Inc., PSPD Highlights Report on Book Distribution Program, May–June 1969, dated July 1969, 5, 17, and 27; Highlights Report July–August 1969, dated September 1969, 10, 16–17, and 25; September 1969 Highlights Report, dated October 6, 1969, 10 and 15. Zofia Romanowicz, who with her husband Kazimierz owned Libella and played a major role in PSPD's mailings and person-to-person-distribution, was twice mentioned favorably in the Polish press in connection with her literary works (*Polityka* [Warsaw], August 9, 1969, and *Życie Literackie* [Kraków], October 12, 1969). Highlights Report October 1969, dated November 7, 1969, 6, and December [1969] Highlights, dated January 7, 1970, 23.

and political science, while political books accounted for 57.1% of all person-to-person distribution. 70% of the 8,306 newspapers and periodicals distributed by PSPD were given to East European visitors to the West. 70% of all newspapers and magazines, many of which were published by émigrés from Western Europe and had a strong political and anti-communist content, were distributed person-to-person. Personalized mailings by or in the name of American academics numbered 1,841. Of these books, 679 were sent to Poland, 504 to Czechoslovakia, 275 to Romania, 257 to Hungary, and 126 to Bulgaria.<sup>22</sup>

How Minden obtained the necessary information to compile his person-to-person distribution reports, and how he sought to control it at the various locations where it took place, was well known to his staff and his distributors. Yet, the actual control method was described for the first time in his last report for Free Europe. "Person-to-person distribution is effectively controlled," Minden wrote, "by means of overt and covert inspections by the director of the division and by divisional representatives (sometimes using assumed identities). The names, callings, and hometowns of East Europeans who receive books in this manner, to the extent that they are known to our field representatives, are reported back to New York. It is therefore assumed that all books reported to have been distributed reach their target."<sup>23</sup> Minden traveled twice a year—once in summer and once in fall—to Western Europe, usually by ship, to visit most if not all of his major book distributors in London, Paris, Rome, Munich, and Lausanne, where he conferred with his German and Austrian distributors.

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<sup>22</sup> George C. Minden, *Semi-Annual Report Calendar 1970 (First Half) The Book Distribution Program, Free Europe Press, Inc., Publications and Special Projects Division, Office of the Director*, undated, 1–25, especially 11–12, plus four appendixes. Appendix 3 (27–39) lists the names of selected book recipients, individuals, institutions, and publications; Appendix 4 (40–54) lists the titles of the books scheduled for mailing or for person-to-person distribution; and Appendix 5 (55–74) lists selected political titles distributed to visitors from Eastern Europe in the first half of 1970.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 4. While browsing unnoticed in a London bookshop, Minden liked to listen to the conversations of unsuspecting visitors from Romania and to their comments about the books they were examining.

Being very security conscious, he usually avoided Vienna because of its proximity to the Iron Curtain. Between 1973 and 1991, the year marking the end of his operations, Minden undertook no less than 25 such inspection tours, a practice he began on an annual basis in the 1960s. Unfortunately, none of the post-1973 trip reports contain any statistical data about the distribution of books and periodicals to East European and later to Russian visitors to the West.<sup>24</sup>

Polish person-to-person distribution totaled 18,352 books and periodicals, a 18.7% drop over the second half of 1969, even though the Polish government now granted exit visas to intellectuals more readily. The large number of institutions to which books were mailed was counterbalanced by the high proportion (51.5%) of books given out to Polish visitors to the West, versus 50.7% in 1969. 8,018 or 43.7% of the books given out dealt directly with politics and law. 12,694 (69.2%) were overtly political, many of them in Polish, making them accessible to many more Poles than books in other languages. The Institut Littéraire in Paris arranged for distribution to Polish sailors at their ports in Belgium, Ireland, Sweden, and the Ivory Coast, to Polish vacationers at tourist centers, to a Polish professor in Belgrade, and to Polish specialists at their work sites in Africa and the Middle East. Two groups of 280 tourists who visited Rome were given about 500 books, and 40 sportsmen visiting France took about 200 books back to Poland.<sup>25</sup>

The last two PSPD statistical reports give the numbers and occupations of the Polish book recipients. In January and February 1970,

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<sup>24</sup> In a letter dated June 28, 1967, the President of Free Europe informed the Executive Committee [CIA]: "PSPD Director George Minden arrived in Rome on June 23<sup>rd</sup> to begin an annual business swing around in West[ern] Europe." The letter listed Geneva, Vienna, Munich, Brussels, and London as destinations, with departure by ship to New York on July 13. The detailed trip reports averaged a length of 10 to 20 pages, with a few as long as 50 or 80 pages. They contain the names of many East European and Russian distributors, and details about their activities and various problems, but no statistical data. These trip reports can be properly evaluated only after Minden's overall files for the years 1970 to 1991 are released. HIA, Minden Collection, Box 2 (1973–1985) and Box 3 (1987–1990).

<sup>25</sup> George C. Minden, *Semi-Annual Report Calendar* (1970) First Half, 16–17.

2,141 Polish visitors received 6,766 books and periodicals. They included 330 students, 171 scientists and technologists, as well as 25 government and party officials. 895 individuals were not identified. A statistical report for July and August 1970 showed that during the first eight months of 1970, 2,143 Polish visitors received a total of 25,745 books and periodicals. The largest group of recipients consisted of students (423), followed by clergymen (384), scientists and technologists (184), teachers (169), workers (88), doctors and psychologists (52), historians (49), and artists and architects (47). There were also 47 political scientists and jurists and five government and party officials. 406 individuals were listed as unidentified.<sup>26</sup>

While the hardline political climate in Czechoslovakia had no visible effect on PSPD's mailing program, tougher exit visa regulations came into force on January 1, 1970. In February, Jaromir Hrbek, the Minister of Education for the Czech Lands, announced a ban on all "uncontrolled contacts" between Czech and Western universities and scientific institutions. All such contacts had to be cleared in advance with his ministry. These measures resulted in a sharp decrease in person-to-person distribution, which amounted to 7,329 books and periodicals, slightly less than one-half of the 14,492 given out during the second half of 1969. However, Czech and Slovak visitors were not afraid to take highly political books, and 4,696 or 50% of the items taken dealt with international relations, political science, and law. Minden's book distributors sent some disturbing reports to the New York Book Center. His London distributor wrote on January 26: "The situation concerning visits from Czechoslovakia is unclear. People still arrive for private visits to relatives [...] and there are persons coming on official business. [Before they leave], all are briefed by security organs: they are warned against contacts with émigrés and they have to report on everything, to whom they spoke, etc." A Czech visitor to Paris told Galerie Lambert: "Contacts with you, your books and kindness, were

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<sup>26</sup> Free Europe Inc., PSPD Book Center, Statistical Report No. 164, for January–February 1970, 1–80, especially 8, and Statistical Report No. 165, July–August 1970, 1–116, especially 8. The report also lists 46 book titles distributed to Polish visitors during that period, eight of them in Polish, by Sławomir Mrożek, Witold Gombrowicz, Jerzy Łukaszewski, Leon Kołodziej, and Czesław Miłosz. *Ibid.*, 9–27.



always valuable to us. I cannot emphasize enough how important that is today now [that] we are cut off from everything.” Another Czech correspondent wrote to Arts and Crafts in London, from which he had received books in 1969, to mail books to him because “now as you probably know, the so-called ‘our government’ [has] prohibited traveling abroad.” Groups seemed to fare better, with 35 singers and musicians from the Czechoslovak Radio in Prague who visited Rome taking 56 publications, including émigré periodicals. 15 members of the Prague Chamber Orchestra were given some 70 publications in Vienna, including political works dealing with the events of 1968 and the invasion of Czechoslovakia. In the first eight months of 1970, 2,089 books were given to 626 Czechoslovak visitors, with students (78) and scientists (55) making up the largest group of recipients.<sup>27</sup>

Due to the smaller operating budget, Hungarian distribution also decreased from 11,000 in the second half of 1969 to 8,811 publications in the first half of 1970, and accounted for 38.4% of all items distributed to Hungary. This occurred at a time when a gradual liberalization was taking place in the country, with some émigré works becoming officially available. Unlike Poles and Czechoslovaks, Hungarians took with them far less books on international affairs and political science—only 13.5% of the items given to them. On the other hand, they took 3,555 newspapers and magazines published by émigrés and of highly political content, which, added to the political books, raised the above share to 69.3%. Distribution was carried out in Vienna, Rome, Paris, London, New York, and, on a smaller scale, in Novi Sad and Subotica in Vojvodina, Stockholm, and Bern. Personalized mailings amounted to 257 books. A group of 42 tourists from Budapest and another group of 15 from Kalocsa visiting Vienna received between them 51 books and 45 periodicals, including the émigré publications *Magyar Híradó* and *Katolikus Szemle*. In the first eight months of 1970, 964 visitors

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<sup>27</sup> George C. Minden, Semi-Annual Report Calendar 1970 (First Half), 17–18; Highlights Report January–February 1970, dated March 19, 1970, 11–13; and Statistical Report No. 165, July–August 1970, 8. The report lists 43 titles distributed person-to-person, including works by Jiří Pelikan, Eugen Loeb, Z. Medvedev, A. Solzhenitsyn, and the émigré periodicals *Naše snahy*, *Česke slovo* (six issues), and the special 1969 Czech issue of *Kultura*, Paris.



from Hungary took 3,972 books, with teachers, students, and scientists making up the largest groups of recipients. 51 titles were distributed person-to-person, including six books in Hungarian and five émigré periodicals.<sup>28</sup>

Romania was already a special case in 1969, when more than half of the mail received from Eastern Europe came from Romanians, asking for twice as many books as they had done in 1968, on subjects which had little political impact such as literature, arts, language, and architecture. This compelled Minden to put the brakes on the mailing program by selectively rejecting many book requests. Because few Romanians received visas to travel to the West, direct distribution remained limited, with 2,408 books given out, slightly less than the 2,573 books handed out in the second half of 1969. Romanian visitors were the most cautious among East Europeans in their choice of books, and only 18% of the publications they took were overtly political. By the end of August 1970, the number of books distributed, given to some 900 visitors, rose to 2,758. 161 Romanians, most of them artists and teachers, received 350 publications in July and August.<sup>29</sup>

Thanks to a number of salvaged, and very detailed, Romanian reports, it is possible to follow the Romanian person-to-person distribution up to the end of 1974, and to learn about the Carol I Foundation in Paris. In 1968, it only mailed books to Romania and had no contact with Romanian visitors. In 1969, it already distributed a total of 2,228 books, and in January–February 1970, it distributed an average of 200 books a month. In March and April 1970, Constantin Cesianu was surprised to see that the number of visiting Romanians increased to at least 300, despite new travel restrictions imposed by the communist regime. He reported: “They are

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<sup>28</sup> George C. Minden, Semi-Annual Report Calendar 1970 (First Half), 19–20. See also PSPD Highlights Report January–February 1970, dated March 10, 1970, 17–18, and Statistical Report No. 165, July–August 1970, 8. The report lists some 50 titles for distribution to Hungarian visitors, including six books in Hungarian, among them Sándor Márai’s *Napló 1958–1967*, *Korunk szellemi körképe*, edited by Gaëtan Picon, works by György Sebestyén, György Gömöri, and József Bakucz, and all five major Hungarian émigré periodicals (47–65).

<sup>29</sup> George C. Minden, Semi-Annual Report Calendar 1970 (First Half), 20–2, and Statistical Report No. 165, July–August 1965, 8.

all interested in books on western ways of thinking, western politics, western art and literature, etc. They are willing to go back to Romania with 'dangerous' books [and] distribute them over there only because they can't take communism anymore [...] They don't want any publications about socialism or communism, they know it too well [...] But authors such as Solzhenitsyn, or a book about the current events in Czechoslovakia will interest them." In London's Arts and Crafts, PSPD distributor Zdeněk Mastník told a Romanian lecturer on an educational course at Manchester University that he could send along any or all of his fellow lecturers, whether teachers or students. In the next few days, there was a "Romanian invasion," with the leader of the group coming in last and promising to write "many letters [...] asking for books." Matsník also reported that "another Romanian visitor [...] said things were much freer in Romania now and that he did not think people were afraid to have books such as *The New Class* sent by post. But his was one man's opinion. The Romanians are very slow to take political books—they almost invariably stick to English language and literature. Copies of *Romania* and any political journal they carefully hide in their pockets."<sup>30</sup>

Bulgarian visitors received 4,068 books and periodicals, as compared to 4,069 in the last half of 1969. Bulgarian distribution was less drastically cut back because of reports of increasing intellectual ferment in the country. Through one of Minden's field representatives, the Union of Bulgarian Writers made an appeal for more books. Bulgarian visitors were ready to take more political books than any other nationality, and 65% of what they received consisted of political books. Four produce truck drivers who were in Vienna took back a total of 22 books and magazines. By the end of August 1970, the total Bulgarian person-to-person distribution had reached 5,458. In July and August, 1,389 publications were given to 583 visitors, including 52 doctors, 33 journalists, and 30 economists and managers.<sup>31</sup> In the first half of 1970, the book program targeting the Baltic republics was almost abandoned and presumably handed over to Radio

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<sup>30</sup> Romanian Report for January–February 1970, 7, and Romanian Report for March–April 1970, 7. Courtesy of Ioana Alimanestianu in New York.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 22–3, Highlights Report January–February 1970, dated March 10, 1970, 26–7; Statistical Report No. 165, July–August 1968, 8.

Liberty. Even so, Minden decided to meet any requests that might still be received and to give out books to any Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians who might contact his distributors.<sup>32</sup>

The report on book distribution for the second half of 1970 was Minden's first report as President of the International Council (IAC). For reasons that may have had to do with U.S. government budget support, he continued the practice of preparing semi-annual reports for the ensuing years—at least until 1973—with his report for the first half of the year being the last report available at the Hoover Institution Archives. For the sake of simplification, the figures for the two semi-annual reports for 1971 and 1972 will be combined when examining the progress of the person-to-person distribution program to East European visitors to the West. During the second half of 1970, the program gave out 43,586 books and periodicals (a 6.3% increase), and, together with the 41,492 publications given out during the first half of the year, the grand total for 1970 was an impressive 84,585 publications—less than the roughly 109,000 given out in 1969 but almost as many as the 85,914 books sent as scheduled mailings in 1970. In the second half of the year, person-to-person distribution accounted for almost 40% of all book program operations, with Poles, Hungarians, and Bulgarians receiving about 10% more books and Czechoslovaks and Romanians receiving less. Personalized mailings for 1970 totaled 3,007 publications, with a marked decline during the second half of the year after IAC ceased to canvass for this service, which accounted for only 1% of Minden's total distribution to all target countries. 1,077 were sent to Poland, 874 to Czechoslovakia, 408 to Hungary, 456 to Romania, and 192 to Bulgaria. These mailings were replaced by so-called "unscheduled mailings" of single copies sent to individual addressees at the initiative of New York. They consisted of review copies received from publishers and books from the stockpiles received as gifts from the USIA. 4,149 books were mailed in this manner in 1970, most of them to Hungary (1,750) and to Czechoslovakia (1,267).<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> George C. Minden, *Semi-Annual Report Calendar 1970 (First Half)*, 23–4.

<sup>33</sup> George C. Minden, President, IAC *Semi-Annual Report of Book Distribution*, July 1 to December 31, 1970, 6–7. The 57-page report includes four appendixes; with Appendix #3 listing the titles scheduled

Because the Polish government was somewhat more generous in issuing exit visas in the second half of 1970, 14% more Polish visitors received books than during the first six months of the year. This method of distribution accounted for 59% of the total of Polish operations during this period. In all, Poles received 39,614 publications during 1970, as compared to 41,599 in 1969. More than two-thirds of the books handed out were of an overtly political nature. Czechs and Slovak visitors received a total of 13,580 books in calendar year 1970.<sup>34</sup> Despite the repressiveness of Gustáv Husák's "normalization" drive, Czechs and Slovaks were less circumspect than Poles in their choice of books, and 50% of the publications they took were on politics and international affairs, and 79% were directly political. In 1970, 13,580 publications, roughly 13% of them highly political newspapers, were distributed to visitors from Czechoslovakia. Special distribution occurred among delegates to the International Historical Congress in Linz, Austria, the Esperanto Congress and a conference on productivity in Vienna, the Sagra Musicale Umbra (Sacred Music of Umbria) festival in Perugia, Italy, and among correspondents covering the SALT meetings in Vienna. Books taken included political works by Džilas, Amalrik, Pelikán, and Garaudy.<sup>35</sup>

Hungarian visitors took a total of 18,410 publications in 1970, as compared to 21,258 in 1969. 2,541 visitors received books in the second half of the year, a 56% increase over the first. Newspapers and magazines, many of them highly political émigré publications, accounted for about one-third of the total distribution, more than any other target country, and some 11,500 were distributed in 1970. Distribution to visitors accounted for almost 40% of the Hungarian book program, and one-third of the publications taken were of

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for both scheduled mailings and person-to-person distribution during the second half of 1970. Seven titles were in Polish, six in Hungarian, and one each in Czech, Russian, and Spanish. The list included five Czechoslovak, five Hungarian, and three Polish émigré periodicals. Some 50 titles were gifts received from the USIA (35–51). Appendix #4 gives the select list of titles mailed in response to requests from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Romania. Two titles were in Polish and eight in Hungarian (52–7). HIA, George Minden Collection, Box 1.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 11–12.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 12–14. Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT).

a directly political character. Adding the newspapers increases this ratio to almost 70%. Hungarian correspondents covering the SALT negotiations in Vienna received 64 books, including works by Djilas, Solzhenitsyn, Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, and Günther Grass.<sup>36</sup>

Because relatively few Romanians were allowed to travel to the West, especially privately, person-to-person distribution made up only a small part (12%–13%) of the Romanian book program. In 1970, Romanian visitors received a total of 4,310 books and periodicals. In the second half of the year, 1,048 visitors took 1,902 books. Artists and architects were the most numerous recipients, followed by teachers and professors, and writers and critics. More than one-fifth were tourists traveling in groups.<sup>37</sup> Bulgarian visitors to the West received 8,671 publications in 1970, and the number of recipients grew by 78% to 1,954 persons in the second half of the year. Bulgarians were very cautious, and two-thirds of the visitors did not wish to identify themselves. On the other hand, roughly 52% of the books, newspapers, and periodicals they chose to take with them were about international affairs and politics, and 60% were of general political impact.<sup>38</sup>

In 1971, a grand total of 233,844 books were distributed to Eastern Europe, of which 96,518 were given directly into the hands of visitors to the West. USIA gift books accounted for 28% of person-to-person distribution. There are no complete figures for the number of visitors for all countries, but a single statistical report provides their number for January to October 1971: 2,531 came from Poland, 1,173 from Hungary, 695 from Romania, 659 from Czechoslovakia, and 304 from Bulgaria. Personalized mailings numbered 3,752, and all the books mailed in the name of Americans to their colleagues in Eastern Europe were delivered. An additional 6,732 individual copies, most of them USIA gift books, were sent as “unscheduled” mailings, mainly to Czechoslovakia and Hungary. The semi-annual person-to-person figures show that in the second half of the year, which included

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 14–16.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 16–17. In the last two months of the year, 642 Romanians received 1,160 books—over 400 at the Carol I Foundation, 350 at the Jungbrunnen bookstore, and the rest at Libella and Interpress Ltd. in London. Romanian Report for November–December 1970, 6.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 18–19.

the tourist season, some 10,000 more publications were given out than during the first half. The greatest part of the increase went to Poles, for whom travel to the West had been made easier in the wake of the previous winter's strikes and rioting. Direct distribution to Czechs and Slovaks declined in the second half of the year, as it became increasingly more difficult for them to leave Czechoslovakia. Over half of all the books given out to the target countries were of a political nature, and this proportion rose to over 70% when political periodicals (over 21,000 in 1971) were added. Figures for the exact number of visiting recipients were sparingly given.<sup>39</sup>

In 1971, Polish visitors received about 45,000 books and periodicals. 22,500 were given to Hungarians, 16,000 to Czechs and Slovaks, 7,500 to Bulgarians, and 5,500 to Romanians. This method of distribution accounted for 60% of all the publications intended for Poland, and some 70% of the publications given out were political. Reports seldom mentioned the number of book recipients, but the report for the second half of 1971 mentions that the 26,800 publications, including 2,000 works in Polish, distributed during that period were taken by 6,913 Polish visitors, with students and clergymen being the largest group, and some 20% not identifying themselves.<sup>40</sup>

The "normalization" imposed under Communist Party secretary general Gustáv Husák led to the resumption of watchful censorship of book parcels sent to Czechoslovakia, and to a reduction in the number of book mailings. As a result, person-to-person distribution assumed a new importance in the second half of 1971, when it became the prime method of distribution to that country. There was a 32% drop in the number of Czech and Slovak visitors in the second half of 1971, and Minden authorized his distributors to be more generous to those willing to take more books. Visitors took an average of five books and,

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<sup>39</sup> George C. Minden, IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, January 1 to June 30, 1971 (undated), 1–51, including four appendixes; and George C. Minden, Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, July 1 to December 31, 1971 (undated), 1–55, especially 2–12. For statistics for the months September–October 1971, see page 1, and 7–8 for the categories of books distributed and the occupations of the recipients.

<sup>40</sup> George C. Minden, IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, July 1 to 31 December 1971, 13–15.

symptomatic of their growing caution, close to 60% did not identify themselves. One-third of those who did were students, followed by scientists and teachers. To keep the program going, IAC also made greater use of Western visitors to Czechoslovakia or of travellers who would mail the books from Hungary or East Germany. Thanks to these tactics, the Czechoslovak person-to-person program declined by only 17.5% during the second half of the year.<sup>41</sup>

The figures for Hungary show that person-to-person distribution grew to become the most important method of supplying Western books and periodicals to Hungarians, with 6,913 visitors receiving 21,668 items, some 40% of them periodicals. Actually, Hungarians took more periodicals than visitors from any other country. Most of these, in Hungarian and published in the West, had a highly political content. Visitors took an average of four books, but government and party officials received an average of 12 each. Journalists and clergymen each received eight. Special distribution was made to Hungarian visitors to the Vienna Trade Fair.<sup>42</sup>

While mailed books were allowed relatively free access to Romania, very few passports were issued, and travel opportunities to the West remained very limited for Romanians. As a result, the person-to-person program accounted for 10% of all book distribution to Romania in the first half of the year, and for 18.5% in the second half. A grand total of 1,584 visitors received an average of two books each, with philosophers and social scientists getting seven, and journalists, historians, and clergymen receiving six. The largest groups were teachers and professors, artists and architects, physicians, and writers and critics. Only 3.5% were students, a much smaller ratio than for any other country.<sup>43</sup>

Four preserved bi-monthly reports on Romania for 1971 provide additional information about direct distribution to Romanian visitors to the West. The Carol I Foundation gave well over 2,000 books, and reported that people were more afraid to take political books than a few years earlier. Even so, next to books on literature, philosophy,

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 15–17. Books were also distributed at a conference of Slavic experts held in Regensburg and Salzburg.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 17–19.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 19–21.



and art, works by Malraux and such Russian authors as Solzhenitsyn, Amalrik, Zhores Medvedev, Roy Medvedev, and A. Martchenko were in great demand. Distribution was heavy at the Librairie Polonaise Arts and at Interpress's Arts and Crafts in London, with visitors asking for English textbooks, bibles, and guidebooks. A group of 10 teachers said it would be almost impossible for them to teach English without the books they received.<sup>44</sup> Arts and Crafts reported an "invasion" by sailors of all ranks and ages from two Romanian ships that had arrived at the London port at the same time. Most of them knew very little English. They asked for textbooks and dictionaries, and promised that when their ships would return they would be speaking better English and coming back for more books to continue their studies. IAC distributor Mastnik wrote: "There is usually one who can speak a little more [English] and acts as spokesman for the others, and they are so friendly and so delighted with the help given them that they are great fun to know."<sup>45</sup> In September and October, some 1,700 books were distributed, 700 more than in July and August. Nine large groups of Romanian tourists, one with 35 doctors from Bucharest and another with 42 technicians from Iași, received books at the Jungbrunnen bookstore in Vienna, and, as in Paris, Russian authors were most in demand. Some 900 books were distributed in November and December, over half of them by the Carol I Foundation, and the rest by Interpress and Libella. Political, social, and philosophical works were the most popular, with books of a general political character amounting to one-half of the total distribution.<sup>46</sup>

Because Bulgaria's very strict postal censorship became even tighter, the importance of the person-to-person method grew further and accounted for one-half of the total distribution to that country. In 1971, Bulgarian visitors received 7,481 books and periodicals, as compared to 8,671 in 1970. Practically all of them came in groups on

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<sup>44</sup> Romanian Person-to-Person distribution report, March–April 1971, 1.

<sup>45</sup> Romanian Person-to-Person distribution report, July–August 1971, 1. A number of Romanian and Polish seamen said it was imperative to know English in the shipping world as it was used internationally.

<sup>46</sup> Romanian Report, September–October 1971, 7, and Romanian Report for November–December 1971, 7. A doctor who came to Paris took 57 books for himself and for his friends and colleagues.



escorted tours by bus or Danube streamer, and distributors found it hard to identify most of them. In the second half of the year, over half of them remained unidentified. Of those who mentioned their professions, some 20% were artists and architects, 18% scientists, 15% physicians, and only 4% were students. Half of the publications they took were about politics and international affairs, a higher proportion than any other East European nationality.<sup>47</sup>

The two lengthy semi-annual reports from 1972 and a single bi-monthly statistical report for 1972 help describe the results of the person-to-person program during that year. Of a total distribution of 130,237 books and periodicals, 93,199 or nearly three-quarters were given out directly to visitors to the West, some 3,000 less than in 1971. Poles received 45,150 publications, Hungarians 21,471, Czechs and Slovaks 13,099, Romanians 6,816, and Bulgarians 6,652. During the first half of the year, books in Eastern European languages accounted for a substantial part of the roughly 27,500 books and periodicals supplied to the field distributors: 21% were in Hungarian, 17% in Czech or Slovak, or both, and 8.4% in Polish. No books were distributed in Romanian or Bulgarian. About 35% were in English, 10.5% in German, and 7.5% in French. In the second half of the year, roughly 19,400 publications, books about politics and international affairs, and some 3,600 periodicals—three-quarters of them émigré publications in Polish, Hungarian, Czech, and Slovak—were given out. Personalized mailings, most of them to Poland and to Czechoslovakia, numbered 3,334, and unscheduled books mailed individually, most of them to Hungary and to Czechoslovakia, numbered 6,490.<sup>48</sup>

The new Edward Gierek regime in Poland considerably eased controls on travel abroad, and distribution to Polish visitors increased in both halves of the year, accounting for some 60% of all books and peri-

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<sup>47</sup> George C. Minden, IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution January 1, 1971, 20; and George C. Minden, Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, July 1 to December 1971, 21–2.

<sup>48</sup> George C. Minden, IAC undated Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, January 1 to June 30, 1972, 1–64, including five appendixes, especially 6–8 and Appendix #3, with general statistics; and George C. Minden, undated Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, July 1 to December 1972, 1–78, including five appendixes, especially 5–8 and Appendix #3 with general statistics.

odicals delivered to Poland. About 45,000 publications were handed out to 11,984 Poles, an average of almost four per head. A quarter of the recipients were students, followed by teachers, scientists, and clergymen. 20% of the recipients did not identify themselves. A particularly large number of Polish clergymen and pilgrims attended the beatification ceremonies for Father Kolbe in Rome. In the second half of the year, 59 government and party officials took a total of 159 books and periodicals. In the first half of the year, 2,310 books and periodicals in Polish were scheduled for person-to-person distribution. During the summer, a new Polish distributor began working in Stockholm.<sup>49</sup>

During the second half of 1972, there was an upturn in Czechoslovak person-to-person distribution, when it accounted for almost 40% of everything delivered to that country. Almost one-third of the 13,099 books and publications given out dealt with politics and international affairs, and some 40% were newspapers and periodicals. 1,578 visitors were reported to have received publications in the second half of the year, and a total of 2,667 in the entire year. Eight government and party officials took no less than 108 books and periodicals. Only 44% of the recipients disclosed their occupations. Of those who did, scientists were the largest group, followed by students. In the first half of the year, some 4,700 books in Czech or Slovak were scheduled for person-to-person distribution.<sup>50</sup>

In the second half of 1972, the number of publications handed out to Hungarians stood at 13,261, then rose to 21,472 by the end of the year. 4,130 visitors from Hungary received an average of five publications a head, while professional people (philosophers, jurists, journalists), many of whom were able to travel by car, got far more than others. Half of the recipients disclosed their occupations, with students being the largest group (25%), followed by workers and teachers. In the first half of the year, roughly 5,800 Hungarian periodicals were scheduled for eventual direct distribution to visitors. IAC made a special effort to distribute books to East European visitors at the Olympic Games in Munich, where more Hungarian visitors than

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<sup>49</sup> Minden Semi-Annual Report, January 1 to June 30, 1972, 12–14, and Minden Semi-Annual Report, July 1 to December 31, 1972, 14–17.

<sup>50</sup> Minden Semi-Annual Report, January 1 to June 30, 1972, 14–16, and Minden Semi-Annual Report, July 1 to December 31, 1972, 17–21.

usual turned up. Vienna remained the main Hungarian distribution point and was particularly favored by IBUSZ bus tours.<sup>51</sup>

In 1972, a total of 2,199 visitors from Romania received 6,816 books and periodicals, with a marked increase during the second half of the year. Person-to-person distribution amounted to roughly 20% of the Romanian book program. The Carol I Foundation remained the exclusively Romanian distribution point, but books were also handed out in London, Vienna, and Munich, and to a lesser extent in New York and at the Romanian library in Freiburg, Germany. Approximately 60% of the books taken were about politics, and 20% about language and education. Recipients took an average of four books apiece, but five historians received nine each, 10 journalists received 79 between them, and two clergymen shared 14 books and periodicals. University professors and teachers predominated among the visitors, followed by scientists and students. The number of writers dropped in the second half of the year, following the Ceaușescu regime's drive to make literati adhere more closely to the proper ideological line and to grant exit visas only to politically reliable applicants. Works by Solzhenitsyn, Pasternak, Mircea Eliade, Paul Goma, Eugène Ionesco, Malraux, Charles de Gaulle, and Teilhard de Chardin, as well as the Bible in Romanian, were in great demand, but Romanians were reluctant to take books of an overtly political nature. The captains and higher crew members of three Romanian ships docked in London came to Arts and Crafts and requested English language books, as well as books for their children who studied English in school. Romanian visitors to the Munich Olympic Games were under close supervision and circulated mainly in groups. Those who managed to contact the new Romanian distributor were interested in books by Romanian authors abroad, such as Eliade and Ionesco.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Minden IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, January 1 to June 1972, 17–19, and Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, July 1 to December 31, 1972, 21–5.

<sup>52</sup> Minden IAC Report on Book Distribution, January 1 to June 30, 1972, 19–20, and Minden, IAC Report on Book Distribution, July 1 to December 31, 1972, 25–9. Constantin Sporea in Munich became the first Romanian book distributor in West Germany. Three Romanian libraries in West Germany also gave out books to visiting Romanians. According to a new regulation, every Romanian who wanted to travel abroad had to apply for per-

A total of 6,642 books and periodicals were handed out to Bulgarians, who numbered 538 in the first half of the year, with no figure available for the second half. At the beginning of 1972, distribution by IAC's Bulgarian distributors in Munich and Frankfurt was discontinued, resulting in the end of the program in West Germany. Person-to-person distribution accounted for about 40% of the Bulgarian book program, and roughly 45% of the books taken were of a political character. 63% of the visitors declined to identify themselves. Of those who did, the majority were scientists, artists, teachers, students, and physicians. Government and party officials made up 6% of the visitors. Bulgarians took an average of five books per head in the first half of the year, and seven in the second half, more than any other nationality. Three philosophers received an average of 19 books each, and social scientists an average of 13.7. Minden explained: "The Bulgarian visitors' eagerness to take books may partly be due to the almost total lack of any Western publications for sale in Bulgaria and to the extreme difficulty in securing delivery through the mails. Moreover, those who are permitted to travel to the West are generally considered politically sound by the Bulgarian authorities and sometimes even have prior permission to import whatever publications they wish."<sup>53</sup>

The last semi-annual report covers exactly the first half of 1973. Of the 105,605 books and periodicals distributed during that period, 42,415 or 40% were given out to East European visitors, 24% less than in the second half of 1972. 14,165, or one-third of the publications distributed were about politics and international affairs, 7% about history, and 6% about social sciences. About 13,500 (18%) were newspapers and periodicals, 10,649 in Hungarian, Polish, Czech, or Slovak. In the first half of 1973, 25,000 books and periodicals were scheduled for person-to-person distribution and dispatched to IAC's book distributors. More than half of these were in Eastern European

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mission from the head of his office or working place. In case he did not come back, his superior who gave the permission was held responsible. Romanian Report for March–April 1972, 9. See also *ibid.*, January–February 1972, 9.; May–June 1972, 27; July–August 1972, 29, and September–October 1972, 1.

<sup>53</sup> Minden IAC Report on Book Distribution, July 1 to December 32, 1972, 29–32, 32. See also Minden IAC Report on Book Distribution, 1 January to June 30, 1972, 21–2.

languages—roughly 24% in Hungarian, 18% in Czech, 10% in Polish, 1% in Slovak, and a handful in Russian. 27% of the publications were in English, 12% in German, 7% in French, and 0.2% in Italian. Some two-thirds of all books distributors bought on the spot were in Polish for distribution to Polish visitors, while very few Hungarian, Czech, or Slovak books were bought in this manner. Minden estimated that about one-half of all publications given out to Poles was in Polish, and some 30% of everything given to Czech and to Hungarian visitors was in their native language. A very small share of what was given to Bulgarians was in Russian or Bulgarian, and nothing was distributed in Romanian. Of the 9,700 books IAC received from the USIA or Simon & Schuster, very few were used for person-to-person distribution.<sup>54</sup>

In the first half of 1973, IAC supplied Poland with a total of 35,344 books and periodicals, some 10,000 less than in the second half of 1972, a 21% decline. Of these, 19,117 were distributed person-to-person to 5,370 Polish visitors, compared to the 26,737 given out in the previous six months. Direct distribution accounted for 54% of all publications supplied to Poland. There was an increase in the number of books on politics, economics, and social sciences taken away, with an average of 3.6 publications per head. The occupation of three-quarters of them was known, with students being the largest group (28.5%), followed by teachers, scientists, and clergymen. Government and party officials took an average of 9.4 books apiece. The report noted that over 50% of all recipients of person-to-person books and periodicals were Poles: 57.7% in the first half of 1973, 54.6% in the second half of 1972, and 53.8% in the first half of 1972. During each of these three six-month periods, Polish visitors took almost one-half of everything distributed to East European visitors. Personalized mailings amounted to 325, and individual unscheduled mailings to 117. Both methods played a very small part in the total distribution to Poland.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>54</sup> George C. Minden, IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, January 1 to June 30, 1973, 2–9. The 83-page report includes five appendixes (statistics, selected titles mailed, selected titles distributed person-to-person for each target country, and selected titles mailed on request to each target country). HIA, George Minden Collection, Box 1.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 15–19.

Out of a total of 19,220 books and periodicals supplied to Czechoslovakia, 5,543 were distributed to 1,089 Czech and Slovak visitors. This method registered a decrease of 28%, as compared to the second half of 1972, when 7,724 books were given out and accounted for 29% of the total distribution, second behind the scheduled mailings share, which was 32%. Unscheduled mailings numbered 1,646, and nine out of 10 were USIA gift books. 86% of all that was given to visitors were books and periodicals with a political content, the highest proportion of any of the five East European countries. More political books and less newspapers and magazines were distributed than in the second half of 1972. Visitors took an average of five publications apiece, but eight historians took a total of 166 books among them, well above the average. Recipients were cautious, and over half of the recipients did not disclose their occupations. Among those who did, students made up the largest group (22%), followed by scientists and artists (15% each), and clergymen and teachers (10% each).<sup>56</sup>

Out of a total of 22,936 publications distributed to Hungary, 9,208 were given out directly to 1,818 visitors to the West, a seasonal decline of 30.6%. Thus, person-to-person distribution accounted for 40% of the total distribution to Hungary. 78% of all direct distribution were books (34.6%) and periodicals (43.5%) of a political nature. Over 97% of the periodicals scheduled for eventual person-to-person distribution were Hungarian émigré journals with a highly political content, such as *Irodalmi Újság*, *Magyar Híradó*, and *Új Látóhatár*. 40% of the recipients disclosed their occupations, with writers and critics making up the largest group (nearly 15%), followed by students, economists, managers, scientists, artists, and architects. Unscheduled mailings numbered 1,415, mostly from the stock of USIA gift books.<sup>57</sup>

526 Bulgarian visitors received 4,288 books and periodicals in the first half of 1973, out of a total of 8,349 publications supplied to Bulgaria, 400 more than in the previous six-month period. With scheduled mailings declining by 35% because of very strict censorship, for the first time person-to-person distribution became the main means of distribution, amounting to 51% of the total distribution to Bulgaria.

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 19–20, 22–4.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 24–9.

67% of the total direct distribution consisted of political titles or periodicals. Each visitor took an average of eight books a head. 11 historians took a total of 254 books and periodicals, and teachers and philosophers an average of 15 books each. Just as in previous years, those who took books with a high political content were those citizens most trusted by the regime and allowed to travel to the West, often in official capacities, with special permission to import books. 86% identified themselves, and the largest occupational group was made up of scientists (some 20%), followed by artists and architects, teachers, students, and journalists. Personalized mailings numbered 1,719, and individual unscheduled mailings 3,497.<sup>58</sup>

Out of a total of 19,756 books and periodicals supplied to Romania, 4,259 were handed out person-to-person to 527 visitors from the country, barely half of the 1,150 visitors during the second half of 1972. The number of publications given out was practically the same as in the previous six months, and 70% higher than in the first half of 1972. Political books and periodicals made up almost 57% of the person-to-person distribution. Romanian visitors took an average of 2.4 books each, but three philosophers shared 64 books, 15 writers and critics were given an average of 15 books each, and 29 artists and architects an average of 14 each. Over 60% of the recipients gave their occupations, with teachers making up the largest group, followed by scientists. A sharp decrease in the number of writers was noted, as well as the smaller number of scientists and technologists, with only 78 of them, less than half as many as in the previous six months.<sup>59</sup>

The last substantive source of information about Minden's person-to-person distribution program is the collection of four preserved Romanian reports, three of them from 1974. In the summer of 1973, a professor of medieval history at the University of Bucharest received 18 books during a visit to New York. Several groups of professors, teachers, and students received books in London and at the Carol I Foundation in Paris, and works by Solzhenitsyn continued to be in great demand.<sup>60</sup> In the first two months of 1974, a total of 1,646

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 35–9.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 30, 34–5.

<sup>60</sup> Romanian Report for July–August 1973, 29. Courtesy of Ioana Alimanestianu in New York.



books were distributed, 826 of them by Interpress Ltd. in London. Dr. Cristian Popișteanu, an historian and the editor-in-chief of *Magazin Historic*, visited twice and took some 36 books. Titles were on World War II history and the Soviet Union, as well as works by Orwell, Toynbee, and Hugh Trevor Roper. Two lecturers in English and American literature at the University of Iași received 23 and 29 books, respectively, including works by Solzhenitsyn, Pasternak, Djilas, Zhores and Roy Medvedev, Kafka, and Svetlana Alliluyeva. Ion Coteanu at the Carol I University Foundation in Paris gave out 439 books to 22 visitors. One-third of the titles chosen were by Russian authors, plus works by Mircea Eliade and Paul Goma. Libella in Paris distributed 243 books, and Constantin Sporea in Munich gave out 124 books to 23 visitors. A Romanian U.N. diplomat received four books in New York.<sup>61</sup>

A total of 1,223 books were distributed in May and June 1974 to Romanian visitors to the West. Interpress gave out about 700 books to economists, professors, students, lawyers, sociologists, doctors, seamen, and ship officers. One ship officer took 10 books for his friend, an economist. Books that were most in demand included works by Solzhenitsyn, the Holy Bible, the New English Bible, and Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago*. Libella in Paris gave out 243 books, and Sporea in Munich 61 books, including many titles on the USSR and the Soviet bloc. A professor of sociology from the University of Cluj spending a semester at Columbia University in New York took home 12 books, all of them about politics.<sup>62</sup> The last Romanian report available covers the months July, August, and September 1974, during which a total of 1,357 books were distributed. Visitors included two groups of 47 teachers and students, a party of 28 economists and other professionals, and officers and seamen from five different ships. Two ethnic Hungarians from Cluj, Transylvania—an artist and a writer—received books in London and in Paris. It was noted that more Romanians were traveling by themselves or in smaller groups. A minister and his wife,

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<sup>61</sup> Romanian Report for January–February 1974, 7–8. Ibid. The report listed the book titles most in demand by Romanian visitors: *La cellule des misérables* by Paul Goma, *Journal en miettes* by Eugene Ionesco, *Fragments d'un journal* by Mircea Eliade, and *Die Bukowina im zweiten Weltkrieg* by Hermann Weber.

<sup>62</sup> Romanian Person-to-Person Distribution Report, 1–2. Ibid.



a professor of theology, and a student of theology took eight books about religion and theology. There was great interest in books on philosophy, religion, and contemporary history, in bibles, and in works by Russian writers and dissidents. Zdeněk Mastník reported an amusing incident: “A Romanian girl stalked out of the shop at the sight of the number of Solzhenitsyn books on the shelves saying, ‘If I want to read Solzhenitsyn, I can read him in Russian at home.’ A sentiment that did not seem to be shared by most other visitors at Interpress.” Seven ethnic Hungarians from Transylvania, including the writer András Sütő, received books in Munich, and a visiting university professor took home 18 books, most of them by Romanian émigré and Russian dissident authors.<sup>63</sup>

These fragmentary Romanian reports, donated by the author’s former Romanian colleague at the New York Book Center, indicate that the person-to-person distribution program was still in full bloom in the mid-1970s, and continued most vigorously throughout the 1980s, as shown by the accounts of a number of book distributors who contributed to this book. Since none of these reports were classified, it is high time for the still missing documents to be released to the public. There must be thousands of East European book recipients who are still alive today. On the basis of the written evidence now available, the many books and periodicals they took home and read and then shared with their families, friends, and colleagues were, as a Hungarian poet and writer put it, like “Manna from Heaven for our [starved] thoughts.”<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Romanian Person-to-Person Distribution Report for July–August 1964, 1–3. Ibid. Sütő had collaborated on a collection of poems entitled *Neue Siebenbürgische Ungarische Lyrik* [New Transylvanian Hungarian poetry].

<sup>64</sup> József Tornai, *Leszálltam anyám öléből* [I climbed off my mother’s lap] (Budapest: Ister, 2000), 123.

## CHAPTER 13

# The Most Important Book Distribution Point: Vienna

Because of its geographical proximity to communist-ruled Eastern Europe, Austria and its vibrant capital city, Vienna, played a key role throughout the duration of the book distribution and book mailing programs. Many people, Austrians and East European émigrés, were involved in this endeavor, as well as a number of Austrian organizations. But the key role was played by one single man who, for close to a quarter of a century, became George Minden's most important man in Vienna. After 1990 until his retirement in 2002, he managed the Wiener Spielzeugschachtel, a children's toyshop in Vienna. Today, Peter Straka enjoys the quiet and well-deserved life of a pensioner, dividing his time between his hometown Vienna and his bucolic home in the small village of Ratsch in southern Styria, on the Austrian-Slovenian border, which lies at the end of his garden and vineyard. Still an active traveler, friendly and unassuming, it is hard to believe how important a role he played at a time when it was risky and sometimes dangerous to smuggle Western and émigré political and other books and periodicals across the Iron Curtain, or to approach large groups of East European tourists, with a possible informer lurking among them. Yet, for over two decades, Straka managed, alone or with the cooperation and assistance of others, to mail or to distribute hand to hand tens of thousands of the best books the West had to offer to the culturally and intellectually starved intellectuals and readers of Eastern Europe.

This author, at that time the Hungarian national plans advisor for George Minden's Book Center in New York, has known Peter for some three decades. We met for the first time in 1971 in Vienna, on a

hot summer day at his Jungbrunnen bookstore. He looked and dressed more like a British gentleman than an Austrian bookshop manager, and he still looks like that today. His assortment and selection of Western and émigré literature, both supplied from New York and purchased in Europe, were truly impressive, as he proudly showed his visitor around and explained the various facets of his book distribution activities. As we left the store, we noticed that we were being followed, but eventually we managed to shake off the unwanted company. In true Viennese tradition, the city was teeming with Czech, Polish, Hungarian, and other communist secret service agents. Perhaps this was one of the reasons why the great mastermind of the program at times chose to meet Straka and others in places like Lausanne or London, during his bi-annual meetings with his book distributors in Western Europe. After two recent personal meetings in Vienna and a regular exchange of correspondence, it became absolutely clear that this modest and unassuming man, who once managed the Jungbrunnen and Frick bookstores, was in fact the very center and soul of the Austrian book distribution program in Vienna until the very end, when the program was terminated in the fall of 1991. Based on his own account and personal experiences, here is the fascinating story of what for decades took place on the geographic and ideological East-West frontline and meeting point in Vienna.

Peter Straka was born in 1941 in London, the son of Dr. Anton Straka, a Social Democrat who emigrated from Austria in 1939. His Jewish mother spent half a year in hiding in the Wienerwald forest near Vienna before she managed to flee to England. After working for the BBC, M15, and M16, Dr. Straka returned from England to Austria in 1947 and joined the Austrian security services. He served as secretary to Josef Holaubek (1905–1999), police chief of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> districts of Vienna, then as Security Chief of the province of Carinthia, and from 1965 until his death in 1966 as head of the State Police, that is, the Domestic Secret Service at the Ministry of the Interior. During his first school years in Vienna, young Peter had some problems with the German language, but he perfected it as an employee and later manager of the Braumüller and Frick bookshops, both owned by the Forum Verlag, the publishing house of the Austrian Socialist Party (SPÖ). He also enriched his librarian's skills at the Times Book Store in London, and set up an English book section at Frick. He got his first baptism of fire at the age of 18, while distributing books

and periodicals at the 1959 World Youth Festival in Vienna, a communist-organized propaganda affair. The festival was challenged by a joint U.S.-British counteraction program with the aid and support of several Austrian politicians, some of whom became quite prominent later. Members of the Austrian Bundesjugendring (Federal Youth Association), which comprised all Austrian democratic youth organizations, gave each East European participant 1 to 5 Schillings worth of small-format books in practically all East European languages. Distribution took place at special kiosks or at the Jungbrunnen bookstore, and the most successful authors were those blacklisted in Eastern Europe, such as Milovan Djilas, George Orwell, Arthur Koestler, Ignazio Silone, and many others.

In 1966, through the mediation of the Austrian Minister of Justice, Christian Broda, a friend of his father, Straka had his first meeting with Frau Erna Dobler in Munich, George Minden's contact person in Germany. Eventually he met with Ethel Schroeder in New York, who at the time was head of the International Advisory Council (IAC), a fictitious U.S. organization that served as cover for the Publications and Special Projects Division (PSPD) of Free Europe, Inc., under Minden's direction. Straka was asked whether he would be willing to mail Western books to Eastern Europe, with a slip inside that the addressees would send back to acknowledge receipt of the book. IAC would pay for the books, their handling, packing, and mailing, and only wanted a written report on the results and the letters received from Eastern Europe.<sup>1</sup> Straka liked the idea, because, as he put it: "I was always of the opinion that the people behind the Iron Curtain should have the possibility to think freely and to inform themselves freely."<sup>2</sup> For a bookshop manager, besides providing opportunities for the dissemination of Western books to the East, the program also had obvious commercial advantages. Straka sent a catalogue to New York with a list of titles on politics, soci-

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<sup>1</sup> These reports and letters were then compiled by Minden's national sections and formed the backbone of the monthly and annual statistical and highlights reports prepared by PSPD/IAC/ILC, as mentioned in the various chapters of this book.

<sup>2</sup> Haider, "CIA im Kalten Krieg der Bücher" (The CIA in the Cold War of books). See also Straka's interview "Dr. Zhiwago für Russen" (Dr. Zhivago for Russians).

ology, philosophy, and economics for mailing to East European libraries. He soon came in direct contact with George Minden, and he spent four days with him to discuss a distribution concept for the future. He then began to mail books and periodicals to intellectuals and libraries in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Romania, with the help of addresses supplied by Minden's PSPD. He estimated that 40% to 60% of these publications reached their destination. Straka himself recommended some 80% of the German-language books mailed. The Austrian Association for Literature also became involved in the book mailing program. Later, book recipients were invited by the senders should they ever visit Vienna.

In July 1970, Minden and his staff were separated from Free Europe, Inc., and the PSPD assumed the name of its former cover, the International Advisory Council, Inc., with Minden as its president. When Radio Liberty ended its secret book distribution program to the USSR, Minden inherited the program, and IAC became the International Literary Center, Ltd. (ILC), and remained under that name until the termination of the book program. The Vienna distribution point was further expanded and, by Minden's own admission, steadily became one of the more important of his book distribution centers, both by mail and hand to hand. As ILC's main representative there, Peter Straka controlled the ordering of books and all the operations run with the help of Austrian embassies and other official institutions.

Starting in 1966, Straka began to distribute thousands of books on politics, philosophy, religion, sociology, economics, psychology, and contemporary history and literature to Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, Romanians, and Bulgarians, as well as to Poles (although the latter had a marked preference for Paris, London, and Rome), arriving individually or on organized tours by bus or Danube steamer in Vienna. This was the safest method of providing controversial works and highly political East European émigré books and periodicals, which, if mailed, would have been stopped by the censors. At the Jungbrunnen bookstore, and later at the Frick bookshops, visitors could choose books and periodicals worth up to \$10 or 250 Schillings each. For especially interesting or prominent visitors, or visitors from the USSR, the amount could be increased up to 1,000 Schillings. Recipients were only asked to give their occupation and place of residence, but some also gave their addresses and asked for the mailing of more books.

All these publications, sent from the U.S. or purchased in Western Europe, were paid for by the IAC/ILC in New York, with the CIA remaining in the background as the unknown and invisible paymaster—a role it never ceased to play since the book program was launched in July 1956. The Vatican also gave some modest financial aid, primarily for religious publications. There were also many legitimate sponsors, American and West European book publishers in England, France, Italy, and also in neutral Switzerland and Austria. East European visitors received books from the Austrian Association for Literature in Vienna led by Wolfgang Kraus, and were then directed toward Straka's bookstores, where the selection was much greater. Besides the East European émigré periodicals and dissident literature that was distributed after the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, after 1975 Russian dissident literature in Russian also began to be handed out, most of it published by émigré publishers in Paris. They included the works of such authors as Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Andrei Sakharov, Boris Pasternak, Andrei Sinyavski, Zhores and Roy Medvedev, Michael Voslenski, and many others.

Many visitors who left their addresses later received books by mail. In addition to Frick, which took care of the billing and handling, books were mailed from a variety of Vienna bookstores—Jungbrunnen, Universität Bookshop, Braumüller, Urania—all owned by the SPÖ, to ensure that East European authorities did not become suspicious if all parcels bore Frick bookstore labels. Mailings were also carried out using addresses received from New York through IAC and afterwards ILC. On the basis of the returned acknowledgements of receipt, Straka estimates that between 40% and 60% of the book parcels got through the postal censors and reached their destination. Another channel was the distribution of books in German through the Austrian cultural institutes in Prague and Warsaw.

In May 1968, during the Prague Spring under the Dubček regime in Czechoslovakia, the one-week book exhibit in Bratislava, organized with the joint cooperation of the Austrian Association for Literature, the Austrian Europa Verlag, publisher of the Austrian Association of Trade Unions (ÖGB), and the Austrian General Consulate in Bratislava, was a major success. At the end of the exhibit, some 600 books about politics, sociology, and other subjects, worth over 100,000 Schillings, had been distributed. It was a real sensation for the recipi-

ents to take away books free of charge. Other book exhibits were held in Sofia in October 1968, in Varna in 1969, in Bucharest in June 1969, and in May 1982 in Moscow and in Leningrad, with the Residenz publisher in Salzburg, where 100,000 Schillings worth of books were discreetly distributed with assistance from the Soviet Writers' Union and the Austrian embassy in Moscow. Minden was always concerned about Straka going to Eastern Europe, as he was able to go to Bratislava, but not to Sofia or Varna. After learning that he had been blacklisted in Czechoslovakia, Straka preferred to remain in Vienna, but he later went to Moscow and Leningrad at the invitation of the Writers' Union of the USSR.<sup>3</sup>

Books worth up to 1,000 Schillings, many of them critical of communism, were given out to top Marxist-Leninist historians, philosophers, and party officials from Eastern Europe at the annual congresses on the history of the workers' movement organized in Linz by Herbert Steiner (1923–2001), secretary of the Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes (DÖW) (Documentation Archives of the Austrian Resistance), where all the democratic Austrian associations were represented. In this manner, highly controversial books could be handed out and taken across the Iron Curtain. A few participants from the Soviet Union left the books at the Vienna embassy, which then sent these by pouch to Moscow and Leningrad. The same was done at the Alpbach Forums of the Austrian College, attended by historians, philosophers, and economists from Czechoslovakia (among them the current Czech President Václav Klaus), Poland, and Hungary, and a few from Romania and Bulgaria. The procedure was the same: books that were exhibited could be taken away or ordered by the visitors. These were then mailed to them from Vienna. Meetings between East European visitors and Austrian historians and politicians took place at Straka's apartment, not in his bookstore.<sup>4</sup>

In the case of the Soviet Union, to which no books could be mailed, other ways had to be found in order to get the books into the country.

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<sup>3</sup> Letter from Straka to the author, June 29, 2011.

<sup>4</sup> Straka to the author, e-mails dated May 31, 2011 and March 30, 2011. A book exhibit was held in 1986 in Moscow and Leningrad. Straka also organized occasional "open houses" in his home for Minden to meet interesting personalities from the fields of politics, culture, and journalism.

Straka had excellent personal connections to the top leadership of the SPÖ, including Minister of Justice Christian Broda, Vienna Mayor and later Foreign Minister Leopold Gratz, and Chancellor Bruno Kreisky, and, through them, with the various Austrian embassies and consulates in Eastern Europe and in the USSR, not to mention the various Academies of Sciences. In 1975, Straka received a letter from Minden informing him: "Instead of the \$40,000 to \$50,000 we were able to spend every year in Austria for the buying of books for East Europeans, we shall only be able to spend roughly one-third that amount." Minden asked Straka to approach interested people and institutions for financial help. Straka showed the letter to Kreisky, who exclaimed: "But this is from the CIA. You cannot send [books] from Frick and work with them." Straka showed him the stationary that bore the name of the International Advisory Council. Kreisky still refused, but a few weeks later, Straka received a phone call informing him that books could now be sent to the Austrian embassies through the diplomatic pouch.<sup>5</sup> This ingenious system, aptly called "the pouch route," was utilized by a number of other Western countries as well. In this way, books could be exhibited and given to guests invited to various events organized by the Austrian embassy. In addition, they could simply be handed out in private to Russian friends. During the Kreisky era, neutral Austria was favorably looked upon by the East European states, their traditional mutual historical ties playing a role in this. But throughout this period, great caution and, to use Straka's words, a "Fingerspitzengefühl" had to be observed.

Straka recalls that he came to know a high-ranking diplomat at the Bulgarian embassy in Vienna who always took a large number of books with him to Bulgaria, part of which he sold there or on the way through Hungary and Romania. Some of these books found their way via Sofia into the USSR. This was also a way to get literature critical of com-

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<sup>5</sup> See the article by Haider in the *Wiener Zeitung* (October 22, 2010). The Austrian diplomatic and cultural representations did not know who the real "sponsor" of the book shipments was. In his letter, Minden wrote: "Since our distribution from your country was probably the most successful in Europe and since the east European intelligentsia, after fifteen years of book distribution, had gotten so much used to receiving books from Vienna, I feel something should be done so that our East European friends might continue to get the books [...] they need so badly." Minden to Straka, July 1, 1975.



munism into Eastern Europe and beyond.<sup>6</sup> In another instance, a photocopying machine was broken down into several pieces and secretly taken to Prague, mainly by diplomats, and reassembled at the Technical University. Following the Warsaw Pact invasion of 1968, students and historians wrote and photocopied, within one week, *The Black Book of the Invasion of the CSSR*. Straka received a copy and took it to New York, where it was published ten days later in pocket format.<sup>7</sup>

Straka also recalls that when the first volume of Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* appeared in Switzerland in 1974, he phoned his colleagues in the U.S. and suggested to purchase more copies to have enough in stock. The Americans immediately bought 1,000 copies, which were delivered to Frick, which hardly had enough space to store them. When the news hit the press, Frick delivered the book, which Straka then sold to Minden before it was printed again.

In 1967–1968, Straka agreed with Minden to start sending French and German books, including the works of Leszek Kołakowski, Milan Kundera, Pavel Kohout, Alexis de Tocqueville, Manes Sperber, Milovan Djilas, Witold Gombrowicz, Arthur Koestler, Sigmund Freud, Franz Kafka, Hermann Broch, Robert Musil, Günther Grass, Heinrich Böll, Karl Popper, and many others, including a most valuable annual German publication, the *Fischer Almanach*. Straka recommended 80% of these works. The Europa Verlag and its director, Erich Pogats, gave him their full support. The bookstores involved in the mailings joined forces with the various organizations and institutes that had contacts with Eastern Europe, and whose members were able to travel to Eastern Europe and to take Western books with them for distribution. Minden soon recognized that Austria had become one of the most important and successful partners for his organization. In this increasingly complex and somewhat risky enterprise, from the

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<sup>6</sup> Straka to the author, e-mails dated August 13, 2008, September 10, 2008, and May 7, 2011. A number of East European diplomats, such as cultural attaches, who received books in Vienna, sent them home in the diplomatic pouch and resold them there. Others sent the books to other East European countries. This worked for a while, until this or that diplomat would suddenly “disappear,” with his successor anxious to resume the business. Peter Straka, “IAC-ILC,” undated personal report, 1–7.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

late 1960s onwards the Jungbrunnen and Frick bookstores became the most important distribution points for all East European visitors to Vienna. In the early 1980s, so many Hungarians and Poles came to take books that in 1984, Minden had to impose a monthly limit of \$400 for the former, and to limit Polish distribution to travel groups that could be identified as coming from Poland.

Straka estimates that between 40,000 and 50,000 books and periodicals were distributed throughout the years in Vienna, including some 1,000 copies of *Gulag Archipelago*. He also assumed a key role as the main contact person and book supplier of Minden's other national distributors in Vienna: the Czech Ludwig Kolín, the Hungarians Gyula Klamár and József Varga, the Bulgarian Stefan Tabakoff, the Pole Kazimierz Knap at the Nansen Haus, and the Russian Lev Rudkevich, just to name the most important.<sup>8</sup> Straka also closely cooperated with Karl Matal (1923–2001), a journalist of Czech origin and the Vienna representative of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), as well as Count Richard Belcredi, who was of Czech origin and later served as ambassador to Switzerland under the presidency of Václav Havel. In 1985, Minden asked Straka to become the president of the Board of Directors of the Association Internationale de Planning, S.A. (AIDP), succeeding André Mari, the son of a former mayor of Nice and owner of a bookstore in Aix-en-Provence, and one of Minden's key French book mailers. The other board members were Zygmunt Kallenbach in Geneva, Zdeněk Mastník in London, and Elizabeth (Jo) Esterhazy, born Wilson, as secretary general and treasurer in Brussels.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Gyula Klamár (1906–1979), an émigré journalist, staff member, and since 1962 editor-in-chief of *Magyar Híradó* in Vienna; József Varga (1923–1988), a Hungarian émigré politician, director of Europa Haus (1962–1971), and then head of the cultural office of the City of Vienna until his retirement; on Stefan Tabakoff, the émigré Bulgarian politician, see Luksan, “In Lebenlang Widerstand” [“Life-long resistance”].

<sup>9</sup> Throughout the book program, all financing was done through the IAC or the ILC. The AIDP, registered in Liberia with a seat in Brussels, was used to transfer the funds IAC/ILC needed from the U.S. to Brussels, where part of it remained for European operations, and the rest was transferred to New York. All five members of its board of directors were Europeans, and the society prepared its own budget, which amounted to \$450,000 to \$500,000 per quarter in 1989. Minden to ILC, Ltd, October 24, 1989.

As mentioned, from the early 1960s onwards, Minden visited most if not all of his East European and later Russian book distributors twice a year. This was his way of controlling, through personal observation, the effectiveness of the hand-to-hand distribution method, as well as to discuss with his field people the various aspects of their activities—in which financing played an important role—and to make plans for the future. Between 1974 and 1990, Minden met Straka on no less than 18 occasions, in Vienna, Geneva, London, or in Lausanne, where one of his sons lived. His reports are full of praise for the excellent work and organizational skills of his main Vienna distributor. Minden also held in high regard Straka's opinions and suggestions, and he fully trusted his capabilities. Theirs were two somewhat similar personalities, preferring to work discreetly and without fanfare, emphasizing good organization, financial management, and effective implementation, and avoiding any adventurous actions. As Minden wrote: "I know you have this operation at heart as much as I do and that you have many friends who think well of our book distribution."<sup>10</sup> Another testimony to the value of Straka's work is the personal letter he received one year after the Warsaw Pact invasion from Bishop František Tomašek, the Apostolic Administrator of Prague, thanking him in German for supplying both priests and laymen with valuable theological literature.<sup>11</sup> Straka also often met in Vienna, or every three or four years in New York, with Minden's national plans advisor for Czechoslovakia, William (Vilém) Brzorád (1911–1995), and with Dr. Bohumir Bunza (1908–1990), a Czech freelancer for Radio Free Europe in Rome who gave out books to East European visitors. Every

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<sup>10</sup> Minden to Straka, July 1, 1975. Between the summer of 1973 and November–December 1990, Minden made a total of 23 trips to Europe, and his reports about his book distributors and publishers amount to some 200 pages. Once the missing Minden files for the years 1973 and 1991 will become available, a proper evaluation of these reports will be possible.

<sup>11</sup> František Tomašek to Straka, Prague, June 13, 1969. František Tomašek (1899–1992) was a secretly ordained bishop of Olomouc in 1949. Sent to a labor camp in 1950, he was freed in 1953 and allowed to function only as a village parish priest. The Administrator of the Archdiocese of Prague in 1965, he was a firm supporter of the Prague Spring and of Charter 77. As the Archbishop of Prague and Cardinal in 1977, he was an old friend of Pope John Paul II.

Christmas, Straka sent several boxes of the famous Viennese Sacher Torte to New York, to the delight of Minden's staff members.

In the secret and also not so secret ideological and cultural warfare between East and West during the Cold War, it is estimated that during a period of 35 years, some 10 million books were mailed and smuggled across the Iron Curtain, despite the futile attempts of the communist postal censors and customs inspectors to stem the flow. During those decades, many individuals in the East as well as in the West risked a great deal, but especially in the East, where functionaries could lose all the benefits they enjoyed as members of the "nomenklatura." Both Minden and Straka acted with the utmost discretion; only a few persons were aware of these activities, and no journalist ever wrote about them. If not, the communist regimes would have certainly stopped them. There was no criticism of the discreet contacts made with East European intellectuals and scientists not necessarily tied to party and government members. As Straka puts it: "I would like to stress that many people 'smuggled knowledge' to make it possible to build democratic states later. This was possible only through absolute discretion. It was interesting, difficult, at times nerve wrecking work which ended up with success. A successful revolution through books and information carried out without ostentation."<sup>12</sup> Without the material aid of the U.S., through the invisible channel of the CIA, this enterprise could have never been financed. But those individuals, institutions, and organizations that carried it out on both sides of the Atlantic for so many years also deserve praise for their efforts and ideas, and for their faith in the ultimate victory of the pen over the sword. Peter Straka belongs to those Austrian liberals who were not deterred by neutrality, and who did their best to reach out to their less fortunate East European neighbors.

*The Western book exhibition in Bratislava during the Prague Spring.* An exhibition of Western books, organized by the Vienna publisher Europa Verlag, was held in the House of Culture in Bratislava on May 17–27, 1968. It was highly successful, with 700 to 1,000 books worth 100,000 Schillings given out to interested visitors by the end

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<sup>12</sup> Straka to the author, letter dated August 23, 2011.

of the exhibition. The event elicited requests for 4,485 books from some 1,500 Czechoslovak visitors. A short item about the exhibit appeared in the May 19, 1968 issue of the Bratislava newspaper *Lud* (*The people*).

The exhibition was held in cooperation with the Slovak Academy of Sciences and the Jungbrunnen bookshop in Vienna. Peter Straka was the originator of the project, and chiefly responsible for its execution. With George Minden's approval, visitors were provided with forms at the exhibit asking them to list titles published by Europa Verlag which they would like to receive free of charge. The form stated: "We will try to send you the books from Vienna free of charge." After screening the requests, at least one book was to be sent to each individual who filled out the form.

Since Europa Verlag specialized in books on political subjects, many of the requests were in that area. Of the 4,485 requests, roughly 1,800 were in international affairs and politics, 930 in religion and Marxist philosophy, 570 in sociology, 210 in economics, 120 in literature, 75 in education, 30 in psychology, as well as 30 requests for catalogues. Not all visitors indicated their profession. Among those who did, there were 181 technicians and scientists, 118 students, 115 professors and teachers, 95 physicians, 46 jurists, 35 journalists, 25 artists, 19 sociologists and historians, 16 writers, 16 economists, eight government and party officials, and two priests, a total of 676 persons. It was estimated that the majority of those who did not indicate their profession (803) were students. The titles selected included works by Paul Lazarsfeld, Adam Schaff, Walter Laqueur, Vladimir Dedijer, Ludwig Feuerbach, and books on Christianity, Marxism, Karl Marx, social democracy, anti-Semitism, China, and Israel.<sup>13</sup>

Some of the books requested during Europa Verlag's May exhibition in Bratislava were mailed before the Warsaw Pact invasion of August 21. Since most of the titles were political, PSPD decided to stop further mailings after this date. As acknowledgements of receipt continued to arrive even after the occupation, the Division decided to gradually resume the mailing from Vienna of those requests that still

<sup>13</sup> Memorandum to the President Free Europe, Inc. from PSPD/G, Minden. Highlights Report May-June 1968, dated July 22, 1968, 8-9. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Microfiche Provisional Box 3.

had not been filled. PSPD hoped to send off all 4,485 books asked for in Bratislava by the end of 1968.<sup>14</sup>

*The International Book Fair in Sofia, Bulgaria.* The International Book Fair held in Sofia on October 6–15, 1968, was very successful, and it gave PSPD useful pointers for the future course of its book projects. According to *The New York Times*, the fair “provoked excitement and a keen longing for wider cultural exchanges.” It displayed exhibits from booksellers from 20 different countries, most of them Western, and included a wide range of books in West European languages. All 15,000 foreign books (more than half of them from the West) were bought by the state import agency. Party and state leader Todor Zhivkov, as well as many other top-ranking party and government members, visited the fair. This made it clear that, after the long years during which almost all books from the West were anathema, the fog of suspicion and fear was lifting and the Bulgarian elite felt more secure and relaxed. Well over 40,000 persons attended the fair, and it was safe to assume that the bulk of them spoke at least one West European language. The fair revealed that English had superseded French as the Bulgarians’ first West European foreign language. In light of this, PSPD’s emphasis was on language, that is, books on linguistics, literature, philosophy, and social studies. PSPD also encouraged its sponsors to take part in next year’s book fair.<sup>15</sup>

The impact of the Fair continued to resound through letters received from Bulgaria. In its wake, intellectuals felt freer to write to the West and to request books and other printed matter. A Sofia professor asked for two books he saw at the Fair because they could not be obtained in Bulgaria. For lack of foreign currency, he offered to send the French publisher souvenirs or stamps. Another correspondent wrote that he had not had the opportunity to see new books for over twenty years, and asked for a catalogue.<sup>16</sup>

*The Western Book Exhibit in Bucharest, Romania.* The Jungbrunnen bookstore in Vienna and its manager Peter Straka made arrangements

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<sup>14</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1968, dated November 11, 1968, 11.

<sup>15</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1968, dated November 11, 1968, 25.

<sup>16</sup> Highlights Report November–December, dated January 15, 1969, 24–5.

with the Romanian Academy of Sciences to stage a display of books at the Austrian house of Europa Verlag in Bucharest. Representatives of the Union of Communist Youth agreed to sponsor the exhibit, and the cultural section of the Foreign Ministry was equally favorable to the idea. The show, which was to include many political titles, was due to open in Bucharest in May, and visitors would be able to order copies of the books on display. Within the constraints of the budget for the next fiscal year, PSPD would try to fill out such orders. After the exhibit was over, the display copies of the books could not be given out to private individuals, but were to be presented to various Romanian libraries and the Union of Communist Youth.<sup>17</sup>

On June 9, 1969, Ion Popescu, secretary of the Union's Central Committee, opened the exhibition—which was under the auspices of the Central Committee of Romania's Union of Communist Youth—in the Mihai Eminescu bookstore in Bucharest. The whole range of Europa Verlag's 1969 publications was on display, with the exception of 29 titles to which the censors objected. During its first four days, some 2,000 visitors viewed the display and were able to place orders for the books they wanted. PSPD tried to meet these orders as far as its budget allowed. Once the exhibition was over, the display copies of the books were distributed to Romanian libraries and the Union.<sup>18</sup> During the summer months, the Jungbrunnen bookstore forwarded 200 more requests. This brought the requests received as a result of the display of books published by Europa Verlag of Vienna and organized by Jungbrunnen in Bucharest in June 1969 to more than 800.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1969, dated May 12, 1969, 24.

<sup>18</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1969, dated July 11, 1969, 20–1. The titles of the 29 books not allowed by the censors are not listed in the report. Works by George Orwell, Dan Sperber, and others were on display.

<sup>19</sup> Highlights Report September 1969, dated October 6, 1969, 19.

## CHAPTER 14

# Letters from Poland, the Crucial Country

For a period of over 30 years, thousands of letters acknowledging receipt of books sent and requesting other books arrived at the New York Book Center, forwarded by the numerous sponsors involved in the book program in the U.S. and in Western Europe. The original letters are no longer available; they may have been shredded when the book program ended in 1991 or were perhaps shipped to Washington and stored away in some government agency warehouse. Yet, excerpts from the most interesting letters were carefully selected by the national editors and translated into English. A country-by-country selection from these excerpts provides the most authentic testimony and vivid evidence to the warm reception and deep impact of the book program, which was aimed at breaking through the ideological and cultural iron curtain cutting off East Central Europe from the rest of the world. The abundance of these translated excerpts has necessitated a selective approach and at times difficult choices in order to avoid repetitions and duplications. Despite some differences due to national characteristics, the letters also showed many similarities, indicating that the vast majority of book recipients in all countries under communist totalitarian rule suffered from the same restrictions and shared similar aspirations and desires.

During the first three-and-half years of the book program, from July 1956 to December 1959, Poland received the largest number of books (194,400 out of some 669,000). It was the clear frontrunner in the number of responses received, with 10,900 letters out of a total of roughly 15,300 from all the target countries, as compared to 2,009



letters from Hungary and 1,142 letters from Czechoslovakia. This began to change drastically by the early 1960s.<sup>1</sup> Of the 4,445 responses received in March and April 1963, 2,082 came from Poland, placing it first, with Hungary a close second and Czechoslovakia far behind. With regard to requests, Poland was a close second, behind Hungary with 1,222 out of 2,931 requests, and Czechoslovakia a distant third. In May 1963, Poland was back ahead of Hungary for both responses and requests. Two months later, Hungary was first for responses, Poland first for requests. In November, Hungary led for the first time in both categories, with 3,472 responses and 2,502 requests versus 3,054 responses and 2,031 requests from Poland. In December 1965, Poland led to Hungary in the number of books acknowledged (2,293), while Hungary was ahead of Poland in the number of books requested (1,495), with Czechoslovakia a close third in both categories. These fluctuations show that the book program had successfully begun to penetrate most of Eastern Europe, with Romania and Bulgaria being the most difficult to penetrate.<sup>2</sup>

Responses from Poland decreased in the second half of 1966, and mail received in January 1967 remained low, with only 852 letters. During 1966, a great many requests arrived in response to the mailing of a gift book order form offering a choice of three books from an enclosed list. However, few acknowledgements were received for books that were sent individually. In January and February, letters were sent to the individuals in question asking them whether they had received the books. About 60% of the respondents stated that they had received at least one (and some two or all three) of the books mailed to them. These results showed that censorship was active.<sup>3</sup> During May and June 1967, slightly more letters of acknowledgement arrived from insti-

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<sup>1</sup> Free Europe Press, Mailing Operations, Monthly Report No. 41, December 1969, 1. Courtesy of John P. C. Matthews. The Summaries of Responses to Mailing Operations for the years 1956 to 1959 seldom contain direct quotes and merely refer to books acknowledged or requested.

<sup>2</sup> March [1963] Highlights, dated April 8, 1963, 1, and April [1963] Highlights, dated May 6, 1963, 1. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Microfiche Provisional Box 3. If not otherwise indicated, all quotes come from this source. Minden changed twice his way of referencing the Highlights Reports.

<sup>3</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1967, dated March 17, 1967, 1.

tutions (855) than from individuals (715). During the same period, more than three times as many letters of request from individuals (567) as from institutions (144) were received.<sup>4</sup>

*Politics and international affairs.* Many people acknowledged the receipt of many controversial books on international affairs and politics, communist ideology, Soviet politics, history, as well as on sociology and economics. Highly political works acknowledged included Donald Zagoria's *Sino-Soviet Conflict*, Zbigniew Brzezinski's *Ideology and Power in Soviet Politics*, Herman Kahn's *On Thermonuclear War*, and *The New York Times* supplement on the Cuban crisis. However, the Military Political Academy in Warsaw complained of not having received several parcels of books they had requested from Kultura in Paris. Subscriptions to *Politique Etrangère* (Foreign policy) offered by the Paris Centre d'Études de Politique Etrangère were accepted by five Polish organizations and five university libraries and institutes.<sup>5</sup>

Letters continued to confirm the receipt of controversial titles in spite of difficulties with the censors, including Gérard Rosenthal's *Mémoire pour la réhabilitation de Zinoviev*, Leopold Labedz's and Walter Laqueur's *Future of Communist Society*, and several works on Western politics and the Common Market.<sup>6</sup> The ideologist Adam Schaff acknowledged the *Sovietica* series edited by Jozef Maria Bocheński and requested the complete works of Karl Marx in German.<sup>7</sup> The Polish Union of Journalists and the Military-Political Academy in Warsaw both acknowledged controversial books on the USSR, Sino-Soviet relations, and West European unity.<sup>8</sup>

The editor of the weekly *Polityka* and the PUWP Central Committee's School of Social Sciences in Warsaw confirmed the receipt of the controversial work *Dissonant Voices in Soviet Literature* edited by Max Hayward and Patricia Blake. The Labor Institute in Warsaw requested *Droit ouvrier* (Worker law) and *Droit social* (Social

<sup>4</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1967, dated July 18, 1967, 4.

<sup>5</sup> March [1963] Highlights, dated April 8, 1963, 1.

<sup>6</sup> April [1963] Highlights, dated May 6, 1963, 1.

<sup>7</sup> May [1963] Highlights, dated June 6, 1963, 2, and December [1963] Highlights, dated January 10, 1964, 3.

<sup>8</sup> July [1963] Highlights, dated August 7, 1963, 2.

law), because they were sure they would not be allowed to buy such conservative books.<sup>9</sup> The Union of Polish Journalists and the Sejm Library confirmed receipt of Stefan Korboński's *In the Name of Fighting Poland*, a strongly anti-communist exile publication.<sup>10</sup> The Polish Military and Political Academy sent their confirmation for William Griffith's *Albania and the Sino-Soviet Split* through the Polish military attaché in Washington.<sup>11</sup>

Receipt of controversial titles was confirmed for books published by Kultura and by other exile publishers, such as books on U.S. and West European politics and law, disarmament, capitalism, labor relations, European unity, democratic institutions, Western economic theories, and modern Christianity.<sup>12</sup> Controversial books were acknowledged by the School of Social Sciences of the PUWP Central Committee (*The Unpunished Crime* by Alfred Berzins, *Soviet History of World War II* by Robert F. Gallagher, and *The New Face of Soviet Totalitarianism* by Adam Ulam), and by the National Library in Warsaw (Zygmunt Nagorski's *Personalities of My Time*, published with PSPD help, Czesław Miłosz's *Conquest of Power*, and Jan Kucharczyński's book on Soviet totalitarianism).<sup>13</sup> The library in Kórnik confirmed the receipt of the reprint of an article that had appeared in *The New York Times* in February 1964: William Norman Grigg's "The Cold War Will Not End in Our Time." The sponsor did not ask for confirmation in sending out this reprint.<sup>14</sup>

Among the controversial political books acknowledged by libraries were *Chine-URRS: La fin d'une hégémonie* (The end of an hegemony) by François Fejtő, *Imre Nagy, l'homme trahi* (Imre Nagy, the betrayed man) by Tibor Méray, *American Foreign Policy Since World War II* by John Spanier, *The Cold War: A Reappraisal* by Evan Luard, and *The Communist States at the Crossroads* by Adam Bromke.<sup>15</sup> Other political

<sup>9</sup> October [1963] Highlights, dated November 8, 1963, 2. Numerous responses also came following mailings on the Common Market and on Yugoslavia.

<sup>10</sup> January [1964] Highlights, dated February 7, 1964, 2.

<sup>11</sup> March [1964] Highlights, dated April 8, 1964, 3.

<sup>12</sup> April [1964] Highlights, dated May 5, 1964, 4.

<sup>13</sup> May [1964] Highlights, dated June 10, 1964, 3.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>15</sup> March [1966] Highlights, dated April 11, 1966, 4.

books that were acknowledged included *Evolutionary Socialism* by Eduard Bernstein, which was acknowledged by *Polityka*, Gomulka's mouthpiece; David Ingram's *The Communist Economic Challenge* by *Ekonomista*, a Warsaw economics publication, and the Polish Institute of International Affairs; as well as Raymond Aron's *Démocratie et totalitarisme* by the School of Social Sciences of the PUWP Central Committee.<sup>16</sup> In general, acknowledgements for highly controversial books were received from organizations, not individuals. The National Library of Warsaw and the Military Historical Institute in Warsaw both acknowledged *Le massacre de Katyn: crime russe ou crime allemand?* (The Katyn massacre: Russian crime or German crime?) by Henri de Montfort, and the former also confirmed the receipt of *Occupation allemande et soviétique de la Pologne* (German and Soviet occupation of Poland). The Western Institute in Poznań acknowledged Walter Laqueur's *Deutschland und Russland*, the Parliament Library in Warsaw *World Revolutionary Elites*, and the Polish Institute of International Affairs Bertram Wolfe's *Lénine, Trotsky, Staline*.<sup>17</sup>

Many thank-you letters from institutions were received for books on democracy, freedom, and law. They included the Military Political Academy, for the receipt of *American Democracy in Theory and Practice* by Robert Kenneth Carr, Marvin Bernstein, and Walter Murphy; the Institute of International Affairs, for Maurice Cranston's *What are Human Rights?*; and the Poznań University Library, the Association of Polish Journalists, the National Library, and the Polish Society of Social Sciences, for Leo Pfeffer's *The Liberties of an American*.<sup>18</sup> The mailing of a single issue of the magazine *International Conciliation*, published by the Carnegie Foundation, with an offer of a year's subscription, was quite successful. Among those who accepted were the School of Social Sciences at the PUWP Central Committee and the Chair of International Public Law of the Jagiellonian University in Kraków. University Chairs of Law were good channels for political books. In May 1965, the Chair of Public Law at the Copernicus University of Toruń and the Chair of Law at Łódź University both acknowledged

<sup>16</sup> May [1966] Highlights, dated June 13, 1966, 4.

<sup>17</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1967, dated March 17, 1967, 2.

<sup>18</sup> June [1964] Highlights, dated July 17, 1964, 5.

and requested books on politics.<sup>19</sup> Letters of acknowledgement were also received from several professors of political law in Toruń and in Kraków.<sup>20</sup>

A few examples that show how the book program helped Polish universities deserve to be mentioned. In January 1968, PSPD was asked through its sponsors to supply books for the library of the newly formed Department of Political Sciences at Warsaw University, which replaced the Higher School of Social Sciences of the PUWP's Central Committee. Professor R. Bierzanek, the future head of the Section on International Law, met in Paris with Jan Ostaszewski of the Polish School of Political and Social Sciences in London to determine what Western books he wished to have for the new library. The *Librairie Polonaise* in Paris sent a first shipment of some 30 books, as well as the mimeographed texts of lectures given by some 15 professors of international law at the Sorbonne, to Bierzanek. Other books were to be sent from London and from New York. This event was important not only because of the large number of books to be supplied and their political subject matter, but also because a leading professor at an important Polish university consulted with Poles in the West as to what books the newly created library of Warsaw University should contain.<sup>21</sup>

This was not a unique contribution. More Polish universities were turning to Western sources (PSPD sponsors) for books. The Department of Political Law of the Copernicus University in Toruń informed several sponsors that they intended to specialize in Western political and constitutional law. In 1967, the sponsors in France sent a total of 47 books, all political or economic in nature, to the university, all of which were acknowledged.<sup>22</sup> A letter from the University Library in Łódź indicated that books sent to them, far from being hidden away or restricted in readership, were distributed to the appropriate faculty within the university. The letter acknowledged the receipt of 56 out of 111 books requested, and apologized for the delay in replying because the library first wanted to distribute the books to the appropriate departments. "In accordance with the policy of our library, we acted

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<sup>19</sup> May [1965] Highlights, dated June 8, 1965, 3.

<sup>20</sup> May [1966] Highlights, dated June 13, 1966, 4.

<sup>21</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1968, dated March 14, 1968, 2–3.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

in this case exclusively as intermediaries and we did not take books for our own use. We would be grateful if it would be possible in the future to send our own requests to you. Books in the main library are accessible to more readers.”<sup>23</sup>

In April 1968, the library of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań sent a list of 188 desired books to the University of Virginia, a sponsor. PSPD approved 68 of them, most of them on history, sociology, and political science, as well as the books on Polish post-war history by Hansjakob Stehle and Anna Cienciala, and Adam Bromke’s *Poland’s Politics*.<sup>24</sup> The head of the Department of Law at the University of Poznań wrote that even university libraries were often short of textbooks. “For us, because of currency exchange difficulties, the books you send are of tremendous help. Perhaps this will surprise you, but the Department of Civil Law in Poznań receives about five ‘coupons’ a year for buying five books from the West through the university library. These books deal with civil law and not medicine, physics, etc. which must be given priority, but it is hard for us to abide by this.”<sup>25</sup>

Despite the censorship, many acknowledgements of receipt for many political, economic, and other dangerous (from the censors’ viewpoint) books continued to arrive, mainly from libraries and other institutions. Among them were the National Library and the libraries of Warsaw University and the Jagellonian University of Kraków (for Stanisław Kot’s *Conversations with the Kremlin* and *Dispatches from Russia*), the Polish Institute of International Affairs, the Polish Society of Political Science, and the Łódź University Library (for *The Political Economy of Communism* by P. J. D. Wiles). Other controversial books received included J. L. Talmon’s *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*, Alexander Dallin’s *Diversity in International Communism*, R. C. Tucker’s *The Soviet Political Mind*, Simone Weil’s *Oppression et liberté*, Władysław Pobóg-Malinowski’s *Recent Political History of Poland*, Jasny Naum’s *Essays on the Soviet Economy*, and Frederic Pryor’s *The Communist Foreign Trade System*.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>24</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1968, dated May 16, 1968, 3.

<sup>25</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1968, dated July 22, 1968, 4.

<sup>26</sup> July [1964] Highlights, dated August 10, 1964, 4.

*Polityka*, the most important political weekly which served as Gomułka's mouthpiece, confirmed the receipt of Abraham Brumberg's *Russia under Khrushchev*, David Floyd's *Mao Against Khrushchev*, and several issues of *East Europe*. The Chairman of the Polish Senate, Czesław Wycech (1899–1977), confirmed receipt of Brzezinski's *The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict*. Books acknowledged included works on Soviet Marxism, Chinese communist literature, Russian politics and political thought, Marija Gimbutas's *The Balts*, Madeleine Korbel's *Poland Between East and West*, and Władysław Sikorski's *La campagne polono-russe de 1920* (The Polish-Russian campaign of 1920).<sup>27</sup> The Library of the Supreme Court in Warsaw acknowledged René David's *Les grands systèmes de droit contemporains* (The great systems of contemporary law), and wrote that the book aroused great interest among Polish judges.<sup>28</sup> Confirmations for controversial books were received from a variety of libraries, institutions, and organizations: the National Library, the Parliament Library, the Society of Polish Journalists in Warsaw, the Center of Press Studies in Kraków, the Library of the Western Press Agency, and the Warsaw bi-weekly *Prawo i Życie* (Law and life).<sup>29</sup> In November 1965, books on Trotsky, the Sino-Soviet bloc, American foreign policy, Boris Lewytzky's *Die Sowjetukraine 1944–1963*, and W. J. Stankiewicz's *Political Thought Since World War II* were acknowledged.

The National Library in Warsaw and the Warsaw Military Political Academy confirmed receipt of the highly controversial publication *Ewolucjonizm* (Evolutionism) by Juliusz Mieroszewski, on evolutionary changes in the Soviet bloc, and of *Biała Księga* (White books), which contained documents and comments on the Soviet attack on Poland in 1939, Soviet deportations, etc. Eleven confirmations were received for the *Report of the Warren Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy*.<sup>30</sup> The Polish Institute of International Affairs in Warsaw thanked for the strongly anti-communist monthly *Polska w Europie*, published by the Polish Federalists Association in France. The National Library in Warsaw acknowledged receipt of the socialist quar-

<sup>27</sup> September [1964] Highlights, dated October 15, 1964, 3.

<sup>28</sup> December [1964] Highlights, dated January 11, 1965, 2.

<sup>29</sup> May [1965] Highlights, dated June 8, 1965, 3.

<sup>30</sup> February [1965] Highlights, dated March 5, 1965, 3.



terly *Dissent*. Both institutions acknowledged the Polish translation of David Floyd's *Romania*, which dealt with the foreign policy conflict between Romania and the USSR. The College for Social Sciences of the WUWP Central Committee acknowledged 12 controversial books in one month, including Louis Fischer's *The Life of Lenin* and *Politics of Socialist Agriculture in Poland: 1945–1960* by Stefan Korboński.<sup>31</sup>

The first six acknowledgements for the Polish translation of Mihajlo Mihajlov's *Moscow Summer 1964* came from the Catholic University of Lublin, the Historical Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences, the University Library of Wrocław, the University Library of Warsaw, the Historical Institute of the University of Toruń, and the Central Military Library. No confirmation of receipt was requested in the belief that this would be too dangerous for the recipients.<sup>32</sup> Another acknowledgement for the book came from the Kraków branch of the Union of Journalists. Acknowledgements for the German translation were received before, but as usual recipients were hesitant to acknowledge controversial material in Polish.<sup>33</sup> About 50% of all the books acknowledged in March 1966 were political (history, international relations, politics, social studies). Large Warsaw libraries and institutes acknowledged Brzezinski's *The Soviet Bloc* and Bernstein's *Evolutionary Socialism*. Some letters referred to political publications in Polish, which were considered the most dangerous. A member of the Literary Institute in Kraków acknowledged General Jozef Haller's *Memoirs* written in Polish. Haller was a national hero and a member of the Polish government-in-exile. This was a controversial book, and at least in one instance PSPD knew that it had been confiscated by the Polish censors.<sup>34</sup>

Despite the censorship, requests for political books continued to arrive. Of the 913 books requested in June 1966, 243 were in this category. The Library of the Art Academy of Kraków wrote: "If possible we would like you to mail us more such books on the history of culture and also on political history." The chair of political law at the University of Toruń asked for two books on politics, and men-

<sup>31</sup> October [1965] Highlights, dated November 8, 1965, 1.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>33</sup> February [1966] Highlights, dated March 9, 1966, 4.

<sup>34</sup> April [1966] Highlights, dated May 11, 1964, 4.



tioned that a history of the French communist party had not arrived in French, adding: "We will find that parcel."<sup>35</sup> A well-known historian acknowledged eleven books, including books on the Sinyavsky trial, *La société soviétique* (Soviet society) by Pierre Sorlin, *La paysannerie et le pouvoir soviétique* (The peasantry and Soviet power) by Moshe Lewin, and issues of the Paris anti-communist journal *Kultura*. A priest asked for *Memoirs* (in Polish) by Wincenty Witos, a former Polish premier and labor leader, and the chief editor of the philosophy journal *Ruch Filozoficzny* (Movement of philosophy) acknowledged the receipt of *Political Freedom* by Alexander Meiklejohn.<sup>36</sup>

In 1967, the majority of acknowledgements for political and other controversial books came from institutions, such as the Parliament Library in Warsaw, the Western Institute in Poznań, the School of Social Sciences of the PUWP Central Committee, the Polish Institute of International Affairs in Warsaw, and the quarterly *Ekonomista*. Controversial political books were acknowledged by the Parliament Library (*Poland's Politics* by Adam Bromke, *Soviet Ideology Today* by Gustav Wetter, *Political Oppositions in Western Democracies* by Robert Dahl, and *Freedom of the Individual* by Stuart Hampshire); the National Library in Warsaw (*China Under Mao* by R. MacFarquher and *Political Ideologies of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* by Hans Kohn); the Central Military Library in Warsaw (*Soviet Military History* by R. Garthoff, *Eastern Europe and World Communism* by George Prpic, and *China After Mao* by Doak Barnett); the Library of the Military Institute of History (*Berlin: The Wall is not Forever* by E. L. Dulles); the Higher School of Social Sciences in Warsaw (books on China, Marxism, and Lenin); the Supreme Court Library (*Freedom of the Individual* by Stuart Hampshire); and the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology in Warsaw (*From Anathema to Dialogue: A Marxist Challenge to the Christian Churches* by Roger Garaudy).<sup>37</sup>

In the following two months, political books were acknowledged by the following institutions: the Higher School of Social Sciences of the PUWP Central Committee (*Eastern Europe and Communism* by George Prpic, *Strange Communists I have Known* by B. D. Wolfe,

<sup>35</sup> June [1966] Highlights, dated July 19, 1966, 2.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>37</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1967, dated November 10, 1967, 4.

and *Meaning of Marxism* by G. D. Cole); the Library of the Military Historical Institute in Warsaw (*Budapest* by Tibor Méray, *Les fusées de Cuba* [The missiles of Cuba] by E. Abel, and *Pologne-Hongrie 1956* by P. Broue); the Central Military Library in Warsaw (*Le massacre de Katyn* by Henri de Monfort, *The Two Faces of Co-existence* by Alfred Berzins, and *Witnesses to the Russian Revolution* by John Reed); the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy (*Histoire du parti communiste français 1965* [History of the French Communist Party 1965] by Jacques Fauvet); and the Parliament Library in Warsaw (*The Years after the Hungarian Revolution in the Perspective of History* edited by Tamás Aczél).<sup>38</sup>

In March and April 1968, the following political books were acknowledged by major Polish libraries and other institutions: the National Library in Warsaw (Ladislaw Mñacko's *Taste of Power*, Herbert Marcuse's *Le marxisme soviétique* [Soviet Marxism], and *Democracy and Changing Social Ideals* [in Polish] edited by Jan Ostaszewski); the Main Military Library in Warsaw (*The Taste of Power* and an issue of *Novyj Zurnal*, a Russian quarterly published in New York; *Nowe Drogi*, the official monthly of the PUWP Central Committee; Boris Meissner's *Sowjetgesellschaft im Wandel* [Changing Soviet society]); the Library of the School of Social Sciences of the PUWP Central Committee (*Marxism* by B. D. Wolfe and *Soviet Economic Controversies* by Jere Felker); the Polish Institute of International Affairs in Warsaw (Trotsky's *Histoire de la révolution russe* [History of the Russian revolution]); the Library of the Military Historical Institute (*Pilsudski's Coup d'État* by Joseph Rothschild); the Parliament Library (books by Kerenski, Aron, and Mñacko); and the library of the Union of Polish Journalists (*The American System of Government* by E. S. Griffith).<sup>39</sup>

The Military Historical Institute in Warsaw acknowledged books on international affairs for the winter 1967 issue of the *Central European Federalist*. The National Library in Warsaw acknowledged the receipt of Svetlana Alliluyeva's *Twenty Letters to a Friend*, Thomas G. Masaryk's *The Spirit of Russia*, and "Czarny Polonez"

<sup>38</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1967, dated January 18, 1968, 5.

<sup>39</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1968, dated May 16, 1968, 3–4.

(“Black Polonaise”), a poem by Kazimierz Wierzyński, which attacked Gomułka. Many acknowledgements came from institutions for books on the U.S. and its political system and government, among others from the library of the Supreme Court, the School of Political Science at the PUWP Central Committee, the Polish Institute of International Relations, the Chair of Political Law, the University of Poznań, and the Institute of Political Science at the University of Poznań.<sup>40</sup> Institutions that acknowledged controversial titles in September and October 1968 included the National Library, the Library of the Sejm, the Library of the Higher School of Social Studies, the Library of the Warsaw Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, the Central Library of the Army in Warsaw, and the Polish Institute of International Affairs. Among the books received were Korboński’s *Fighting Warsaw*, Cardinal Wyszyński’s *Für Freiheit und Menschenwürde* (For freedom and human dignity), Martin Ebon’s *Svetlana: The Story of Stalin’s Daughter*, Matthew Ridgeway’s *The Korean War*, George Kennan’s *Memoirs 1925–1950*, Nicolas Berdiaeff’s *Les sources et le sens du communisme* (The sources and meaning of Communism), and books on Soviet politics, ideology, and history.<sup>41</sup>

*Gift book order forms.* In February 1966, the International Advisory Council (IAC) started the mailing of two gift book order forms to Poland. Addressees could select five titles, of which three would be sent. One list included essays, literary criticism, religion, philosophy, history, and sociology; the other list, books on management and economics. 300 of the humanities order forms were mailed, ten per day, and over 50 requests were received. The most requested titles were Morison’s *Oxford History of the American People*, Irving Louis Horowitz’s *The New Sociology*, a Webster dictionary, and the *Columbia-Viking Desk Encyclopedia*. 100 copies of the second list were sent and elicited 37 initial requests, including one from the Labor Institute in Warsaw.<sup>42</sup>

The two gift book order forms continued to yield good results, with 151 responses to 300 forms, offering a choice of three books in

<sup>40</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1968, dated July 22, 1968, 4.

<sup>41</sup> September–October [1968] Highlights, dated November 11, 1968, 4.

<sup>42</sup> March [1966] Highlights, dated April 11, 1966, 2.

the humanities, and 43 responses to 100 forms, offering a choice of three books on management. In compliance with PSPD's request, practically all respondents to the first offer gave the names of friends who would also like to receive books. The offer was greeted with enthusiasm and gratitude. A writer-translator in Warsaw wrote: "I am very glad to learn about the purpose of the International Advisory Council which is in the full accordance [with] the majority of the population on both sides of the ocean to come close to each other."<sup>43</sup> Initially, 500 IAC gift book order forms were mailed, followed by another 300 forms, sent to 300 new people suggested by the original addressees. By the end of April 1966, 348 individuals had replied.

One respondent, a well-known history professor in Kraków, praised the IAC. He wrote: "Your offer is very generous as [is] the whole purpose of the Council's activities. I had been informed of them already during my short stay in the U.S. some years ago and I was sorry then that I had had no opportunity to get in touch with the Council."<sup>44</sup> Some people wrote on their own behalf to be put on IAC's mailing list. A lecturer at the Christian Theological Academy in Warsaw wrote: "Encouraged by the truly inter-humanistic idea of the IAC, which was founded for the sole purpose of increasing international understanding through the distribution of publications on intellectual and cultural developments throughout the world, I would like to give my name to this organization."<sup>45</sup>

Language books elicited numerous responses from Poland, where they were not available, with respondents stressing the need for books on the English language and on English and American literature. A special gift list in this category mailed to Poland in the spring of 1963 brought responses from over 50% of the addressees.<sup>46</sup> Visitors from Poland informed the Polish Library in London that the Polish translations of the British Council's *Portraits of British Writers*, which the PSPD helped publish, was an official textbook for students of English at Warsaw University.<sup>47</sup> Books on education, English language

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<sup>43</sup> April [1966] Highlights, dated May 11, 1966, 1–2.

<sup>44</sup> May [1966] Highlights, dated June 13, 1966, 2.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> July [1963] Highlights, dated August 7, 1963, 2.

<sup>47</sup> September [1963] Highlights, dated October 4, 1963, 2.

teaching, dictionaries, and other language aids were always in demand, with requests received for many types of educational materials on aptitude tests, adult education, and the development of executive skills. A common theme running through the letters from individuals was the value these books held for their work, such as teaching English. Often, professors asked for books needed for their writing.

The Center for Foreign Languages of the Agricultural College in Poznań wrote: "English textbooks are practically unobtainable in Poland. Our teachers are very happy with the book ([Edna] Furness's *Spelling for the Millions*) mailed." An English teacher wrote: "I appreciate your kindness very much the more so that many up-to-date books and publications on English language are not available in this country."<sup>48</sup> A professor in Poznań wrote: "We have indeed a great shortage of textbooks for teaching the English language. At the Adam Mickiewicz University, as well as at the other language teaching centers, English is the most popular language as far as the number of students is concerned. We have also been receiving English teaching aids from the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw through the American Consulate in Poznań. Unfortunately all this is only a drop in the bucket compared to the great nationwide demand."<sup>49</sup>

The English Language College of Warsaw wrote: "We are your debtors under the circumstances, awaiting the day when we shall be able to stand upon our own legs." The Chair of Sociology of the University of Wrocław, the Warsaw University Historical Institute, and the Economics Institutes in Warsaw and Sopot expressed similar gratitude. The Instytut Pracy, the Labor Institute in Warsaw, wrote to the Polish-American Academic Association in Chicago saying that since they found foreign materials essential to their research, they would like to know which American Institutions they could contact in order to establish a regular exchange of books.<sup>50</sup> An English teacher asked the Kosciuszko Foundation for English grammar books and dictionaries, and wrote: "These books are very useful and are helping many students in their study of the English language."<sup>51</sup> An English

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<sup>48</sup> May [1965] Highlights, dated June 8, 1965, 1.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>50</sup> March [1964] Highlights, dated April 8, 1964, 2.

<sup>51</sup> March [1965] Highlights, dated April 5, 1965, 1.

teacher in Warsaw observed: "Lately the trend toward learning foreign language[s], especially English and Russian, is very strong. This trend is officially supported and consequently there are many textbooks, but not enough manuals for teachers." The head of the Department of Literature at Łódź University wrote: "I will give the book to the library of my department. All the students will be happy. Or useful for the recipient's lectures or for making changes in existing textbooks."<sup>52</sup> An English teacher in Kraków, who received the *Handbook of American Idioms and Idiomatic Usage* by Harold Whitford and Robert Dixon, wrote: "The textbook you sent me will be most useful because I give lessons in English, particularly to persons going to the U.S., either visiting relatives or on scholarships."<sup>53</sup> A lecturer in English at the University of Wrocław who had received language books responded: "All the books sent by you are very helpful to me in teaching English and improving my own knowledge of the language. The books are not obtainable in my country."<sup>54</sup>

A schoolgirl wrote: "My wish is to improve my English. I think that this valuable dictionary would be of great aid in my further learning."<sup>55</sup> A young girl wrote that the Polish-English dictionary sent to her "immensely helped me in preparing my M.S. thesis. Now I have passed my examinations. I enclose proof of it. My success is at least one-fourth due to you." She enclosed a copy of the official certificate of the University of Łódź, stating that she passed her exams with good grades.<sup>56</sup> An English student at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków asked for books on literary criticism, and wrote: "I often have trouble obtaining critical books. My country imports quite a number of English books but these are mainly fiction, dictionaries, and books for studying English. No criticism is to be obtained. Even our department has difficulties in obtaining books and there are never enough books for all students, not to mention the point that very often there [are] no books which are actually needed by fourth- and fifth-year students."<sup>57</sup>

<sup>52</sup> May [1966] Highlights, dated June 13, 1966, 3.

<sup>53</sup> Highlights Report July–August 1967, dated September 10, 1967, 2.

<sup>54</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1970, dated March 10, 1970, 4.

<sup>55</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1967, dated May 10, 1967, 2.

<sup>56</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1968, dated March 14, 1968, 4.

<sup>57</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1969, dated July 11, 1969, 3.

A translator who received a Polish-English dictionary wrote: "The following fact will show how important it is for me to possess it. Until now while working on translations from Polish to English, I had to use a Russian-English dictionary."<sup>58</sup> A television scriptwriter, who received a book on American television plays, wrote: "Such books are of special value to me. I have already translated and adapted for Polish television works by Fast, Nash, Baldwin, Gilroy, etc. I will be grateful if you continue to send me television plays which in your opinion should be produced in Poland."<sup>59</sup>

*American and English literature.* Correspondence from individuals often dealt with books on language, literature, and other non-political subjects. Interest in the English language was usually coupled with a keen interest in American and English cultural life. The editor of a literary student periodical in English, *Paperback*, thanked for books which helped its publication, and wrote that they were organizing meetings with American critics visiting Poland as well as poetry readings from American recordings. He also forwarded copies of *Paperback* for the sponsor's criticisms.<sup>60</sup>

Many professors and students thanked for books and stressed that they were important in bringing Poland and the West closer together. A student wrote: "The book proved very useful and interesting for me and my fellow students as well [...] Books on American literature which you are sending here to Poland are welcome not only as real help in American Studies but also as signs of your good will."<sup>61</sup> A Warsaw student, who had received Webster's *New World Dictionary* and three books on American literature, noted: "These books proved most useful not only to me in my studies of contemporary American literature but also to my fellow students who specialize in the same field. In addition, the books sent by your Foundation are an important symbol of goodwill in strengthening the cultural ties between Poland and the U.S."<sup>62</sup>

<sup>58</sup> December [1965] Highlights, dated January 13, 1966, 3.

<sup>59</sup> June [1966] Highlights, dated July 19, 1966, 3.

<sup>60</sup> August [1963] Highlights, dated September 6, 1963, 1.

<sup>61</sup> July [1964] Highlights, dated August 10, 1964, 4.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.



A professor and translator, who received anthologies of English and American poets, wrote: "All three books are of great help in my difficult work of preparing an anthology of English and American poetry and a first Polish translation of Joyce's *Ulysses*."<sup>63</sup> Literary critics also asked for books on American literature and works by Hemingway, Steinbeck, Sinclair Lewis, Mary McCarthy, Salinger, John Cheever, Mailer, Saul Below, and Albee "because they are unavailable in Poland." The editors of *Głos Nauczycielski* (Teachers' voice), the organ of the Association of Polish Teachers, thanked for the book *The Making of America*, and stated: "Several persons in our editorial office are studying English and therefore we are extremely grateful for any book which helps make our study attractive." A young poet thanked for Robert Frost's poems: "This book is for me a proof that there are ties between writers throughout the world."<sup>64</sup>

The head of the English Department of Kraków's Jagellonian University wrote: "The books [on American playwrights and drama, and on tragicomedy] will be very useful to our students, and some of them we have also found interesting for the staff. Your gift has been a major contribution to our American library."<sup>65</sup> The philological quarterly *Kwartalnik Neofilologiczny* in Warsaw thanked for 26 books, including several on American poetry, American novels, and modern criticism.<sup>66</sup> The Department of Foreign Philology of Warsaw University acknowledged receipt "with great joy and deep gratitude" of 21 works by Dickens, Kipling, and D. H. Lawrence, as well as 205 copies of several classics by such authors as Truman Capote, Emily Brontë, William Golding, and Herman Melville. "They will be of high value and utility in the course of teaching both English language and literature."<sup>67</sup> *Odra*, a monthly in Wrocław, acknowledged the receipt of 12 books sent over a period of time and asked for some others, mainly on literary criticism.<sup>68</sup>

Interest in the United States and all aspects of American life, such as astronautics, post-World War II history, and politics remained

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<sup>63</sup> March [1965] Highlights, dated April 5, 1965, 1.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1968, dated May 16, 1968, 3.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Highlights Report November 1969, dated December 5, 1969, 4.

<sup>68</sup> February [1966] Highlights, dated March 9, 1966, 3.



considerable. An economist in Gdańsk, who received *The American Challenge* by J. J. Servan-Schreiber, wrote: "After studying the book received from you, I plan to make it available to my colleagues, who expressed interest in the problems discussed in the book. After reading it, we intend to organize a discussion of the problems dealt with by the author."<sup>69</sup> A horticulturist in Opole, who received the monthly *American Fruit Grower*, wrote: "After reading this monthly and translating the articles, I mail it together with the translations to instructors in horticulture. They are then able to teach peasants' sons in schools of horticulture about the latest advances in intensive truck farming in America."<sup>70</sup> Congratulations for the success of Apollo 11 and reaching the moon came from an English teacher as well as from *Głos Nauczycielski*.<sup>71</sup>

*Religion and philosophy.* In addition to writers, intellectuals, and scholars, letters also came from clergyman and church and religious groups. A young priest who received a book in French on psychology wrote: "I can't imagine how you got my address and I was extremely touched to realize that people who are strangers to each other can be so close. Who would expect that from a distant part of Europe someone would send me such a useful book, in an completely disinterested way." The Library of the Dominican Fathers in Kraków thanked for Hans Kung's *Le Concile épreuve de l'église* (The council, test of the Church), saying: "We are extremely grateful for this mailing. There is in Poland a great hunger for all new books on religious and philosophical matters." Thank-you letters also arrived from the Bishop of Sandomierz, the Diocesan Office of Sandomierz, and the Evangelical Church in Warsaw.<sup>72</sup> The library of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński acknowledged receipt of Volume 17 of the *Summa Teologica* of St. Thomas, and said they badly needed further volumes of this work.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Highlights Report July–August 1969, dated September 16, 1969, 3.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>72</sup> May [1965] Highlights, dated June 8, 1965, 2.

<sup>73</sup> March [1965] Highlights, dated April 5, 1965, 2. Stefan Wyszyński (1901–1981) was Archbishop of Warsaw and Archbishop of Gniezno from 1948 to 1981, and Primate and Head of the Polish Roman Catholic Church.

A professor of philosophy acknowledged a book written in honor of Professor Bocheński and edited by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka. Bocheński, a Pole teaching in Switzerland, was a specialist in Marxist philosophy.<sup>74</sup> A leading Catholic politician, who cooperated with the regime and requested Jean Piaget's *Sagesse et illusions de la philosophie* (Wisdom and illusions of philosophy), wrote: "My life is difficult and not very pleasant. I continue however with my literary work. Soon my book will be published for which I collected material in Paris, helped generous by the late Dr. Lam" (Dr. Stanislaw Lam was connected with the Librairie Polonaise in Paris, a PSPD sponsor).<sup>75</sup>

The Bishop of Gniezno thanked for René Laurentin's *L'enjeu du Concile. Bilan de la troisième session* (The wager of the Council. Balance of the third session). A theologian at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology acknowledged Bocheński's *Philosophy of Science* and asked for *Secular Meaning of the Gospel* by Paul Van Buren. He also asked the sponsor to help him contact younger and non-Catholic American theologians interested in the study of the New Testament with whom he might be able to correspond and exchange books on this theme. The Catholic Theological Academy in Warsaw wrote to the Polish Historical Institute in Rome: "Our library has difficulty in acquiring books and magazines published in the West. We are taking the liberty to ask if you would be interested in an exchange (of books)." They enclosed a list of the books they wished to offer in exchange.<sup>76</sup> The Associate General Secretary of the United Evangelical Church in Poland thanked for a book sent to the church, and wrote: "We accepted it with much gratitude as we are in need of some Christian literature. And therefore we are grateful for all who help us in this matter and send here some literature." He asked for *World Christian Handbook* by H. Wakelin Coxill and Kenneth Grubb.<sup>77</sup> A Jesuit in Warsaw thanked a sponsor "for your readiness to give effective assistance to me personally—I am preparing a lengthy study on the philosophy of culture and civilization [...]—as well as to my colleagues and to the Writers' Library, which somehow enjoys a special position

<sup>74</sup> December [1965] Highlights, dated January 13, 1966, 2.

<sup>75</sup> February [1966] Highlights, dated March 9, 1966, 1.

<sup>76</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1967, dated March 17, 1967, 3.

<sup>77</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1967, dated January 18, 1968, 3.

in Warsaw and is extensively used by scholars and a large circle of our intelligentsia.”<sup>78</sup>

The librarian of the Częstochowa Seminary in Kraków wrote: “We have received several books from you as gifts for our library. As librarian and professor at the Częstochowa seminary, I wish to thank you in the rector’s name [...] New books help us professors in our research and teaching, while they give our students a chance to become acquainted with what is new in their field.”<sup>79</sup> An assistant professor of philosophy at the Main School of Planning and Statistics in Warsaw told a Paris sponsor: “You are often the only source of foreign publications in fields that are of vital interest to us and necessary to our work.”<sup>80</sup> The chief librarian of the Institute of Sociology of the Catholic University of Lublin wrote to a London sponsor: “We have received the 11 books which we urgently needed. We are most happy to have them since they were essential [...] and particularly useful in view of the fact that we are preparing in addition to our other publications the first large Catholic encyclopedia [to be published in contemporary Poland]. Scholars who come to the institute and use your books have expressed warm appreciation of your generosity.”<sup>81</sup>

*History.* In his letter, a former Polish Minister of Finance and a colleague of Piłsudski avoided mentioning the latter’s name but wrote that he was doing a historical study of the period covered in chapter 28 of the book sent to him. The Chairman of the Law Faculty at the non-Catholic Lublin University forwarded a book on France under De Gaulle written by a former student with the help of many books PSPD contributed.<sup>82</sup> A collection of Polish historical documents was mailed

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<sup>78</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1969, dated July 11, 1969, 3.

<sup>79</sup> Bi-monthly Report for March–April 1971, George C. Minden undated IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, January 1 to June 30, 1971, 4. HIA, Minden Collection, Box 1.

<sup>80</sup> Bi-monthly Report for September–October 1971, George C. Minden undated IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, July 1 to December 31, 1971, 7. Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Bi-monthly Report for January–February 1972, George C. Minden undated IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, January 1 to June 30, 1972, 7. Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> August [1963] Highlights, dated September 6, 1963, 3.

directly from Buenos Aires, where a group of exiles began publishing a series in Polish.<sup>83</sup> A large number of confirmations—30 mailed, 26 acknowledged—were received for *Geschichte der Abendländlichen Aufklärung* (History of the Western Renaissance).<sup>84</sup> The receipt of *History of the Polish Communist Party* by M. K. Dziewanowski was confirmed by the Polish Academy of Science in Kraków, and that of *Polska w Europie* (Poland in Europe) by the Polish Institute of International Affairs. Booth books were highly controversial.<sup>85</sup>

The Historical Institute of Łódź received *Modern Polish History* by Pobóg-Malinowski, and wrote: "We are happy that the book reached us and did not get lost on the way. Only few libraries in Poland can claim possession of this book. Volumes II and III are especially rare. Considering that books on the modern history of Poland are not yet published in Poland, Malinowski's book represents an especially valuable gift."<sup>86</sup> A surprising letter came from the Historical Institute in Łódź, which had received Stanisław Kościółkowski's *Historiography*: "You have given us great pleasure by this mailing. The book is used by professors as an introductory study on historical research. Postwar materials (published in Poland) are unfortunately below the level desired by the teachers." The author, who died some years earlier in London, was strongly anti-communist, and his book was extremely critical of the state of historiography in Poland at the time his book was published.<sup>87</sup>

Serious gaps in the availability of books in Poland became an openly discussed issue in the media. In an article in its February 5, 1966 issue, *Polityka* published the answers of 12 Polish intellectuals—writers, professors, critics—who had been asked what books were urgently needed to meet intellectual and artistic requirements. Almost all of them stressed the need for foreign books. Jan Kott, a literary critic and writer, said: "It is extremely important that we should be able to purchase any import[ed] foreign books, particularly scholarly, technical, and reference books." Henryk Markiewicz, a professor

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<sup>83</sup> April [1965] Highlights, dated May 4, 1965, 3.

<sup>84</sup> September [1964] Highlights, dated October 15, 1964, 3.

<sup>85</sup> April [1965] Highlights, dated May 4, 1965, 3.

<sup>86</sup> December [1965] Highlights, dated January 13, 1966, 3.

<sup>87</sup> February [1966] Highlights, dated March 9, 1966, 3.

of Polish literature, wrote: "Five years ago [...] I made some definite suggestions concerning translations from foreign literary and historical works. I never heard a word from any of the publishing houses, nor were any of the books I suggested ever translated. The books that do appear were very few and chosen haphazardly." Franciszek Ryszka, a historian, commented: "Popular history is being neglected most disastrously [...] I suggest we translate a few of the more important and interesting foreign books [...] [I] also think that we are seriously lacking in publications on philosophy and sociology, particularly the latter [...] I wish to call your attention to our foreign book publishing policy which is probably motivated by shortsighted and not very effective propagandistic aims. Not many people read these books, I am sure. Especially poor are the works on modern history."<sup>88</sup>

An economist in Poznań acknowledged *Współcześni Historycy Brytyjscy* (Contemporary British historians) edited by J. Z. Kędzierski, a book published with support of PSPD. He wrote: "These selected writings are certainly a valuable addition to modern historiography and show a true concern on the part of British historians for matters concerning Poland. There is no doubt that an anthology of this kind develops and promotes in Poland a genuine interest in objective British science."<sup>89</sup>

*Sociology and social sciences.* An associate professor of sociology at the Jagellonian University wrote to PSPD's Polish editor that Western books were an essential part of his course and served to present students with the wider implications of the problems studied.<sup>90</sup> A Polish sociologist who had been in the U.S. some years earlier with a Ford Foundation grant and who had received books through the program after his return to Poland, wrote to the Book Center's Polish editor about his forthcoming book on American sociology: "My last book touched on America in only one-third of its chapters, whereas the

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 4–5.

<sup>89</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1967, dated January 18, 1968, 3. Of the 50 sets of the two books *Byzantium and Europe* by Speros Vryonis and *Reformation and Society* by A.G. Dickens sent, 45 were acknowledged. Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> January [1964] Highlights, dated February 7, 1964, 2.

new one will be strictly 'American.' The Polish Scientific Publishers have suggested that I write a history of American sociology. I think, however, that before undertaking this difficult task I might tackle an easier problem on pragmatism. This is why I am particularly grateful for the two monographs on Veblen—they will be useful in both cases."<sup>91</sup> The Sociology Department of the University of Poznań acknowledged nine books received in the past two months from the Librairie Polonaise, a good example of the concentration of the mailings on important targets.<sup>92</sup>

By the end of 1964, a gradual increase of interest in sociology was evident. The Sociological Library of the University of Łódź acknowledged the receipt of 19 books sent to them over a period of time. A professor of sociology in Kraków wrote: "Books received by me are very valuable for my work. I am extremely grateful and when my study on the sociology of the family appears I will send you a copy."<sup>93</sup> Armand Cuvillier's *Introduction à la sociologie* (Introduction to sociology) brought good responses from the University Library of Wrocław, the Chair of Political Law at the Jagiellonian University, the Library of the Catholic University of Lublin, the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Academy of Sciences, and the Chair of Political Law of Copernicus University in Toruń.<sup>94</sup>

A sociology professor in Poznań asked for books by Florian Znaniecki, a well-known Polish sociologist, who had published his books in English in the U.S. after leaving Poland in 1939. The requester wrote: "Next year is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of *The Polish Peasant* (by Znaniecki) and the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Znaniecki's death. We would like to print something in connection with this [...] Recently a book by Florian Znaniecki appeared (*Social Relations and Social Roles: the Unfinished Systematic Sociology*) which I have not been able even to see, just as it is difficult to find or to borrow his other works published after the last war."<sup>95</sup> A librarian at the Sociology Faculty of the Catholic University of Lublin, who received

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<sup>91</sup> December [1964] Highlights, dated January 11, 1965, 2.

<sup>92</sup> September [1965] Highlights, dated October 8, 1965, 2.

<sup>93</sup> October [1965] Highlights, dated November 8, 1965, 2.

<sup>94</sup> December [1965] Highlights, dated January 13, 1965, 3.

<sup>95</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1967, dated July 18, 1967, 4.

*Raison et révolution* by Herbert Marcuse and *Lévi-Strauss* by Catherine Backès-Clement, wrote that such books “enable our scholars as well as our students to become acquainted with the new lines and trends in the social sciences. This sort of help is of the utmost importance to us.”<sup>96</sup>

*Economics, labor, and management.* Requests and acknowledgements for books on economics, international economic relations, and East-West trade, though a small proportion of the Polish mail, were received mainly from libraries and other organizations. The Wrocław Polytechnic Institute requested more books on economics in English.<sup>97</sup> *Życie Gospodarcze*, an economic weekly published by the authorities, the Polish Institute of International Affairs, and others acknowledged American and French books on economics and the Common Market.<sup>98</sup> Many confirmations for books on economics, business, and labor were received from *Ekonomista*, a leading economic publication, the Association of Polish Journalists in Warsaw, the School of Planning and Statistics of the Institute of Social Economy in Warsaw, and the Higher School of Economics in Kraków.<sup>99</sup> 38 of the 100 copies sent of *Man, Land, and Food* by the U.S. Department of Agriculture were acknowledged.<sup>100</sup> The Rector of the College of Economics in Sopot asked who was responsible for the gift mailed to him and wanted to send him a copy of his memoirs to be published in October 1965.<sup>101</sup>

Since trade unions in Poland were strictly controlled, PSPD could not send books on labor and management directly to them, but it targeted other groups, such as ORGMASZ, the Institute for Organization of the Machine Industry, and the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, who did acknowledge such books.<sup>102</sup> The magazine *Przyjaciel Przy Pracy* (Friend at work), published by the Polish trade unions, asked for a renewal of its subscrip-

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<sup>96</sup> Bi-monthly Report November–December 1970, George C. Minden, undated IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, July 1 to December 31, 1970, 4. HIA, Minden Collection, Box 1.

<sup>97</sup> May [1963] Highlights, dated June 6, 1963, 2.

<sup>98</sup> February [1964] Highlights, dated March 6, 1964, 2.

<sup>99</sup> June [1964] Highlights, dated July 17, 1964, 5.

<sup>100</sup> September [1964] Highlights, dated October 15, 1964, 3.

<sup>101</sup> September [1965] Highlights, dated October 8, 1965, 2.

<sup>102</sup> May [1965] Highlights, dated June 8, 1965, 2.



tion to *National Safety News*. "We badly need to be acquainted with American materials on the subject."<sup>103</sup>

In 1965, interest in labor increased after the Institute of Labor in Warsaw published a magazine called *Informacja Ekspresowa* (Express information), which included reviews of books on labor problems and articles on the same subject. The Institute received several books through PSPD and reviewed four of them in its new publication.<sup>104</sup> The Library of the Main School of Planning and Statistics in Warsaw wrote to the Kosciuszko Foundation, a sponsor: "We are grateful for your help in developing our library. We are highly appreciative of the books mailed by you; the selection is excellent [...] We hope you will continue this help."<sup>105</sup>

Interest in and requests for books on management and labor continued to grow, and many of the letters regarding books on economics came from institutions. The Main School of Planning and Statistics in Warsaw received *Change and Economic Growth* by F. A. Bond, and wrote: "[...] the contents of this book are allowing me to become acquainted with and to use for my research and teaching the achievements of scholars at Michigan University."

A professor in Kraków who received Beryl Sprinkel's *The Management of Prosperity* expressed his complete satisfaction with the selection and asked the sponsor to regard him as "your permanent receiver."<sup>106</sup>

The Polish translation of the Twentieth Century Fund Survey *The U.S. and its Economic Future* by Arnold Barach continued for months to elicit acknowledgements from economic institutes and academies in Poznań, Kraków, Sopot, and Lublin. The department of Political Economics of the University of Toruń wrote that it had not received the book and asked if the sender could please intervene with the post office.<sup>107</sup> A second mailing of the same book was acknowledged by

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<sup>103</sup> February [1966] Highlights, dated March 9, 1966, 4.

<sup>104</sup> October [1965] Highlights, dated November 8, 1965, 2.

<sup>105</sup> February [1966] Highlights, dated March 9, 1966, 2. Letters also came from the Institute of Developing Regions of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Labor Institute in Warsaw.

<sup>106</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1967, dated March 17, 1967, 3.

<sup>107</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1967, dated May 10, 1967, 3.



no less than eight university departments in Wrocław, Kraków, Łódź, Poznań, Toruń, Katowice, and Warsaw. The School of Social Sciences of the PUWP Central Committee also acknowledged the receipt of a number of books, some on economics and on modern capitalism.<sup>108</sup>

A professor of economics in Kraków thanked for *The U.S. Book of Facts, Statistics, and Information*, and added: "I will have many occasions to use the statistical information contained in this book in the course of my lectures."<sup>109</sup> A professor of economic geography at Warsaw University, who received two books on economic development, wrote: "I am especially interested in the economic development of the U.S. and Canada, and I am using most of my lecture time on them. Consequently materials on economics and progress in these countries are very valuable to me." A professor of economics in Warsaw wrote that the book he received would be helpful in his lectures, and another, at the Szczecin Technological University, stated that Douglas North's *Growth and Welfare in the American Past* would help him in his research and teaching.<sup>110</sup>

Books on economics, management, labor, and industry were acknowledged by the Institute for the Economy and Organization of Industry, the Institute for Organization of the Machine Industry, the Ministerial Planning Commission, and the Labor Institute.<sup>111</sup> The National Bank of Poland acknowledged *Federal Economic Policy 1945–1965*, "which will be a most interesting addition to our library. This is used not only by employees of our bank but by numerous scholars throughout the country. We ask you to kindly continue sending us this type of publication which is often unavailable here."<sup>112</sup> The head of the Industrial Economics Department at the Kraków College of Economics, who received two books on economic resources and labor, wrote: "They will facilitate preparation of my lectures and keep them abreast of modern technological and economic progress."<sup>113</sup> An assistant professor at the same university thanked for *Teaching the Process*

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<sup>108</sup> Highlights Report July–August 1967, dated September 10, 1967, 3.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>110</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1967, dated May 10, 1967, 3.

<sup>111</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1967, dated July 18, 1967, 4.

<sup>112</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1967, dated November 10, 1967, 3.

<sup>113</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1968, dated May 16, 1968, 2.

of *Management* by T. M. Mosson, and added: "Valuable chapters of the book will be discussed among my colleagues who belong to the newly organized group [at the University] concerned with the theory of management."<sup>114</sup> *Ekonomista* listed in each of its issues the titles of the foreign books it had received. In issue No. 2 of 1967, this listing included 30 books sent through the book program. Issue No. 5 of the same year listed 24 such titles, and issue No. 6 another 18 titles.<sup>115</sup>

In June 1968, the Polish School of Political and Social Sciences successfully completed a special mailing project it carried out in 1967. It wrote to 16 institutions in Poland—schools and departments of economics and political economy in Warsaw, Kraków, Katowice, Poznań, and Szczecin—offering them 21 books on business and financial management and administration. All 16 accepted, and the 21 books were mailed to each (336 books in all). 12 out of 16 acknowledged the receipt of a total of 194 books. One of those who did—the Central Institute of Scientific, Technical, and Economic Information in Warsaw—was not among the 16 addressees. The sponsor surmised that the Polish postal authorities had redirected some of the packages, but two-thirds of the books arrived safely.<sup>116</sup>

A professor at the University of Łódź wrote that H. L. Heilbronner's book *Understanding Macroeconomics* "will be available to all assistants and students of the faculty of economics."<sup>117</sup> A professor of economics at the University of Poznań wrote: "I have received the book *Financial Integration in Western Europe* by J. Kirchner et al., for which I thank you very much. It arrived just in time, for I was putting the final touches [on] a book I have been writing for a Warsaw publisher, *International Financial Organizations*."<sup>118</sup>

*Medicine and psychology.* The mailing of *La profession médicale* (The medical profession) to Polish doctors brought a good response.<sup>119</sup> The library of the Catholic Theological Academy in Warsaw acknowledged

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1968, dated July 22, 1968, 2–3.

<sup>117</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1968, dated November 11, 1968, 3.

<sup>118</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1970, dated March 10, 1970, 3.

<sup>119</sup> September [1965] Highlights, dated October 8, 1965, 3.

the *Journal International de Psychologie*, and wrote: "We never received this magazine before although it is very important for both professors and students."<sup>120</sup>

*Art.* A woman inspector of art schools wrote to Libella in Paris to praise their books, which she had found in schools all over the country.<sup>121</sup> A young art historian commented on the state of modern art in Poland: "In Poland, although there is a lively center of art and great interest in modern Western art, which by the way elicits very mixed reactions, we seldom have publications such as H. L. C. Jaffe's *La peinture du XXème siècle* (Twentieth-century painting) which cover the entire broad range of modern art. As for Polish art, the situation is different [...] and the fact that our art historians so seldom express their opinions and publish works on modern Western art is probably the result of the general concentration on medieval, renaissance, and baroque art, which were previously neglected. So we must resort to foreign publications, some of which reach our bookstores, but are too expensive for a student's pocket."<sup>122</sup>

A Polish art school thanked for a book on modern painting, and added: "Through your gifts our library gradually becomes richer and richer as regards valuable books on art." The Director of the National Museum in Kraków mailed an invitation to one of PSPD's sponsors to an exhibition of American graphics to be held at the museum.<sup>123</sup> An art school in Warsaw wrote: "We are grateful to you for supplying our school with the most recent works and magazines on art. Without your kind help we would not be able to buy them and all these publications are a great help to our painters."<sup>124</sup> An artist thanked for *The Fireside Treasury of Modern Humor*, and wrote: "Being an artist and drawing pictures for our chief satirical weekly *Szpilki* [Pins] I discover there a lot of interesting and witty subjects to be illustrated."<sup>125</sup> The Art Academy Library in Kraków acknowledged Herbert Read's *A Concise History of Modern Painting*, and wrote: "We request most urgently that

<sup>120</sup> Highlights Report May-June 1968, dated July 2, 1968, 2.

<sup>121</sup> January [1964] Highlights, dated February 7, 1964, 2.

<sup>122</sup> May [1965] Highlights, dated June 8, 1965, 2.

<sup>123</sup> February [1965] Highlights, dated March 5, 1965, 2.

<sup>124</sup> March [1965] Highlights, dated April 5, 1965, 2.

<sup>125</sup> January [1966] Highlights, dated February 1966, 2.

you send us books on the influence of the artist on such fields as architecture, decoration, theatre, film, commercial art, objects of everyday use (porcelain, ceramics), etc. We need this material for the new fast-growing departments of graphic and commercial art.”<sup>126</sup>

*Architecture.* Books on architecture had a great impact in all areas. The Warsaw Academy of Art and the Poznań Urban Project Center commented on the stir of interest on the part of their staff evoked by *Eero Saarinen and His Work* edited by Aline Saarinen.<sup>127</sup> The Association of Architects in Kraków wrote: “It is difficult to express properly how much Kraków architects are obliged to you. Our library is based exclusively on gifts and your participation in these gifts is the largest.”<sup>128</sup> The Kraków Branch of the Association of Polish Architects wrote: “Such gifts are very precious to us because our library has no funds for the acquisition of foreign books. However, thanks to the generosity of various institutions our library possesses more than 600 books.”<sup>129</sup>

The deepening contact between a writer and professor of architecture at the Warsaw Polytechnic Institute and Libella in Paris were shown by the following letter: “I remember with gratitude my visits at the St. Louis en l’Île [Libella’s address] and recently while lecturing on Polish historical landmarks in Paris I had an opportunity to tell my students about Libella, about its nice owners and about the Galerie Lambert [...] At the Polytechnic there is now a new language club, which I helped organize.”<sup>130</sup> The interest in material about Poland published abroad was also shown by a request from an architect who asked for a photocopy of the article by J. M. Fitch, “The Phoenix Cities of Poland,” published in 1964 in the magazine *Horizon*. “For a general appraisal of the construction of Polish cities,” he wrote, “an American opinion is of great importance.”<sup>131</sup> From an association of architects in Kraków came the following praise: “The many beautiful books mailed by you represent a major part of our library which serves

<sup>126</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1967, dated May 10, 1967, 1.

<sup>127</sup> August [1963] Highlights, dated September 6, 1963, 2.

<sup>128</sup> March [1965] Highlights, dated April 5, 1965, 2.

<sup>129</sup> April [1965] Highlights, dated May 4, 1965, 2.

<sup>130</sup> April [1965] Highlights, dated May 4, 1965, 2.

<sup>131</sup> December [1965] Highlights, dated January 13, 1966, 2.

students of architecture and architects in Kraków. We have no funds to buy books and depend on generous gifts.”<sup>132</sup>

Through the mailing program, contacts developed with architects and professors interested in Western architecture. The chief architect of the city of Sopot asked: “Please let me know if it would be possible to invite an architect with the same interest as mine to Sopot to compare our problems [...] If you cannot do anything about this, please send this letter to the Union of French architects.” A professor in Warsaw wrote: “I assure you that my students will profit from this book. All books on urbanism, architecture, and the fine arts interest us greatly and the best are the subject of lively discussions among our faculty members.”<sup>133</sup> The Principal of the High School of Art in Kraków thanked for four books on French cities, and wrote that the books “will be unusually valuable for our school library and will certainly help to increase our students’ and our teachers’ interest in the history of architecture.”<sup>134</sup> An architect in Łódź, who received *La cité de l’an 2000* (The city of the year 2000) by Michel Ragon, wrote: “The contents of the book are of particular interest to me because my field is architecture and urban development [...] I shall take the liberty of passing the book on to my colleagues in order both to enrich their professional knowledge as well as popularize your country’s beautiful publications.”<sup>135</sup>

*Theatre.* The assistant director of the National Theatre Institute in Warsaw, who received *Modernes Welttheater* (Modern world theatre) by Sigfried Kienzle, wrote: “To show you how interesting and important the book is for us, it is enough to say that the people queue to get it.”<sup>136</sup>

*Cinema.* A Warsaw motion picture producer, who was sent *Howard Hawks* by Jean A. Gili, wrote that such books “are of enormous value to our knowledge of what is happening in our profession.”<sup>137</sup>

<sup>132</sup> March [1966] Highlights, dated April 11, 1966, 3.

<sup>133</sup> June [1966] Highlights, dated July 19, 1966, 1.

<sup>134</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1968, dated November 10, 1968, 2.

<sup>135</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1970, dated March 10, 1970, 25–6.

<sup>136</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1967, dated July 18, 1967, 4.

<sup>137</sup> Bi-monthly Report March–April 1972, George C. Minden undated IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, January 1 to June 30, 1972, 5. HIA, Minden Collection, Box 1.

*Music.* A student wrote to the Kosciuszko Foundation asking for works on music listed in a copy of *Textbook in Prints* 1963, which PSPD had mailed to a provincial library.<sup>138</sup> Józef Balcerek, the editor of *Jazz*, a Warsaw monthly, asked the Galerie Lambert for help in getting engagements to perform in France for himself and three other members of a jazz group on their trip to attend the San Sebastian festival in Spain.<sup>139</sup>

A musicologist in Bielsko-Biała wrote: "Thanks to the material you were kind enough to send me, I have been able to finish my work on avant-garde techniques, devoted mostly to contemporary American music: it will be published by Polish Musical Publications in September 1970." He added that he was continuing his research on American composition "despite unfavorable circumstances," and asked for five books and music sheets by four American composers.<sup>140</sup>

*Letters of special interest.* Though the majority of the acknowledgements for books from Poland came from institutions rather than from individuals, letters were also received from the latter, attesting to the value of the books mailed and the use made of them. The secretary of the Committee on Philosophical and Religious Problems of the Warsaw Club of Polish Intelligentsia wrote: "I will be grateful if you will continue to mail other books on literature and philosophy [...] These books are available to all members of the Club and are becoming a subject of discussion [...] Your library is so helpful and we will consider your continued help a noble expression of friendship and goodwill."<sup>141</sup> Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński's librarian confirmed the receipt of a dictionary, and added: "At last something arrived!"<sup>142</sup> In September 1964, PSPD heard back from three of the 34 intellectuals who signed the famous letter regarding censorship addressed to the Polish Prime Minister in March 1965. Professor Stefan Estreicher, chairman of the Society of the Friends of Fine Arts in Kraków, requested a complete set of Feliks Topolski's *Chronicle*,

<sup>138</sup> January [1964] Highlights, dated February 7, 1964, 2.

<sup>139</sup> Highlights July–August 1969, dated September 16, 1969, 3.

<sup>140</sup> Highlights Report November 1969, dated December 5, 1969, 3.

<sup>141</sup> February [1965] Highlights, dated March 5, 1965, 2.

<sup>142</sup> April [1964] Highlights, dated May 5, 1964, 4.

stating that they would like to arrange an exhibition of the publication in Kraków. The others were the editor of the Catholic weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny*, and Prof. Szczepański, a leading sociologist.<sup>143</sup>

Zygmunt Kallenbach, PSPD's sponsor in Geneva, wrote to a number of professors in Poland asking for their comments on the utility of sending books to Poland. By April 1966, he had received about 30 replies with commentaries on his own mailings and the value of the entire Polish mailing operation. Four other letters arrived from a professor of international law at Wrocław University, a professor of history at the Jagellonian University in Kraków, a professor of international law at the University of Poznań, and a professor of law at Wrocław University.<sup>144</sup> The mailing program received an astonishing accolade in a letter from Zbigniew Bieńkowski, one of the editors of the literary monthly *Twórczość*, the official cultural publication of the Polish Communist Party, to Konstanty Jeleński, the editor of the *Anthologie de la poésie polonaise* (Anthology of Polish poetry), who cooperated with *Kultura* and was much in disfavor with the Polish regime. Bieńkowski wrote: "I am already accustomed to asking you for books, but still I am often embarrassed. On the other hand, without your help I would cease to exist intellectually." In the same letter, after discussing various books, he said: "I often read your articles in *Preuves*. They are very interesting, especially what you wrote on Kołakowski and Schaff [...] Your anthology is widely discussed in Poland."<sup>145</sup>

A letter sent to the editor of *Kultura* gave evidence of the effectiveness of the book program, and included highly confidential information concerning its writer. Professor Edward Lipiński, a well-known professor of economics and one of the signatories of the famous "letter of the 34," several of whose books had been translated, joined the Communist Party in the 1950s. During a visit to Rome, he wrote to the editor of *Kultura* requesting several books and back issues of the magazine. On receiving these, he wrote: "I am so happy about these books. Exactly what I wanted [...] Perhaps you heard

<sup>143</sup> September [1964] Highlights, dated October 15, 1964, 2.

<sup>144</sup> April [1966] Highlights dated May 11, 1966, 2. Photocopies of the four letters are at the Hoover Institution Archives, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Microfiche Provisional Box 3.

<sup>145</sup> February [1966] Highlights, dated March 9, 1966, 1.



that I met recently with a lot of unpleasantness. I was told by the Central Committee that because of my lack of loyalty to the party they will not allow my election to the chairmanship of the Polish Economic Society. Prof. L. who advocated my election to the honorary chairmanship was reprimanded, and a representative of the Polish Press Agency who reported on these events was fired immediately. My lack of loyalty was of various kinds. I was criticized for my letter to Ochab protesting the death penalty in the meat trial [...] Great anger was caused by my speech at the Sociological Congress where I sharply criticized our economic system as a hindrance to economic development. I also criticized Professor Oskar Lange for escapism and for taking cover behind mathematical formula instead of concentrating on important problems [...]."<sup>146</sup> In another personal letter to the same addressee, Lipiński—who was also a member of the Polish Academy of Sciences—said that an order had been issued allowing members of the Academy to receive all publications regardless of their content. He asked that *Kultura* be sent to him and that his title always be mentioned.<sup>147</sup>

A professor of history in Poznań wrote to Professor M. K. Dziewanowski in Boston that the latter's book, *The History of the Communist Party in Poland*, had created a great stir and some irritation among top members of the Party, whom he had portrayed as tools of Soviet policy.<sup>148</sup> A young writer in Nowa Huta near Kraków explained how books were circulated: "Books we receive from our friends are not considered our exclusive property. We lend them to those who need them [...] Both my wife and I feel that the importance of a book grows if it is used by more people [...] Books are uniting Poles living in Poland with those dispersed throughout the world." Referring to the Polish translation of Picon's *Panorama des idées contemporaines*, he wrote: "The book is seldom on our bookshelves. It travels among our acquaintances serving as a guide, a creator of thoughts and ideas. It helps in the work of many. I am so accustomed to use this book that

<sup>146</sup> September [1965] Highlights, dated October 8, 1965, 1.

<sup>147</sup> October [1965] Highlights, dated November 8, 1965, 2. Edward Ochab (1906–1989) was PUWP First Secretary from March to October 1956 and Chairman of the State Council from 1964 to 1968.

<sup>148</sup> January [1964] Highlights, dated February 7, 1964, 2.



I cannot imagine facing any ideas, problems, and dilemmas without consulting it.”<sup>149</sup>

The book mailing activities penetrated all parts of Poland and were not limited to large cities, as shown by letters received from small cities and provincial towns, such as from Zamość. A young boy living in a village in Western Poland, who received a Polish-English and English-Polish dictionary, wrote that the book would “enable me to study on, to write, to translate, to teach and to learn.” He asked to correspond with Americans of Polish origin, and added: “The future belongs to the friendship which will certainly reign over the world as we Polish people impatiently wait for such times.”<sup>150</sup> A Polish woman working at the French Embassy in Warsaw confirmed during her visit to Paris that the mailing project was well known and that books were circulating widely in Poland.<sup>151</sup> A Polish employee at the same embassy wrote to a Paris sponsor saying that the French cultural attaché had agreed to their distributing books for PSPD if the titles were not too controversial.<sup>152</sup> A recipient of a guide to French modern literature wrote: “I badly needed this book but its high cost and the difficulty of ordering books abroad made it impossible to obtain. Happily there are still good persons in this world who take care of poor writers.”<sup>153</sup>

An essay on the Turner frontier thesis of American history in *Studia Socjologiczne* (No. 1, 1963) by Alexander Gella, who studied in the U.S. in 1961, almost exclusively used PSPD-supplied American books as sources, and concluded that the thesis was useful in the study of the “ultimate victory of democratic political institutions despite the powerful financial oligarchy.”<sup>154</sup> A Warsaw historian sent a copy of his latest book, *Rok nadziei i rok klęski 1791–92* (Year of hope, year of defeat, 1792–92), and wrote: “I am not sure that any of my publications deserves to be reviewed in the exile press, but should it occur I will be grateful for a clipping.”<sup>155</sup> The Institut Littéraire in Paris con-

<sup>149</sup> March [1965] Highlights, dated April 5, 1965, 2.

<sup>150</sup> April [1965] Highlights, dated May 4, 1965, 2.

<sup>151</sup> September [1963] Highlights, dated October 4, 1963, 2.

<sup>152</sup> March [1964] Highlights, dated April 5, 1964, 3.

<sup>153</sup> November [1965] Highlights, dated December 21, 1965, 3.

<sup>154</sup> August [1963] Highlights, dated September 6, 1963, 3.

<sup>155</sup> February [1965] Highlights, dated March 5, 1965, 2.

tinued to receive numerous requests from Polish merchant ships for books to be sent to them at various ports throughout the world. They sent political and literary books to posts ranging from Rotterdam and Hamburg to Yokohama, Port Said, Aden, Casablanca, Alexandria, and Pireus.<sup>156</sup> The library of the Military Political Academy in Warsaw did not acknowledge books directly, but did so through the military attaché of the Polish Embassy in Washington. In October 1965, it acknowledged the receipt of *The Economic Integration of Hungary into the Soviet Bloc* by László Zsoldos, and Peter Gay's *The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism*, sent by the *Central European Federalist* in New York, a PSPD sponsor.<sup>157</sup>

The University Library of Warsaw confirmed the successful arrival of 365 books, mostly works of French literature. The books were a gift from the French literary critic Gabriel Marcel and were made available to the Library through Jerzy Giedroyc, the editor of *Kultura*, who acted as an intermediary. When the books were shipped, Giedroyc included a number of political books supplied by PSPD.<sup>158</sup> An assistant professor of law at the Jagellonian University of Kraków wrote that he had received *Institutions politiques* (Political institutions) by Maurice Duverger, "which was very much needed by our department and will be greatly appreciated by all. I have just been at a meeting of history of law departments from various universities and all of us agreed that we are greatly indebted to you and that many of our scholarly researches [sic] could not have been carried out without your extraordinary help to us."<sup>159</sup>

A professor of international law at the same university wrote at length about the difficulties in obtaining books. "Our libraries have serious difficulties in obtaining certain books, especially purely scientific ones, and this seriously hampers or even makes impossible scholarly research in several fields. We sometimes have to wait months or even years for works ordered, only to learn in the end that for one reason or another we shall not be able to obtain them. Even exchanges between our libraries do not help the situation, because on the inter-

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> October [1965] Highlights, dated November 8, 1965, 1.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>159</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1967, dated November 10, 1967, 3.

national plane, their holdings are quite limited—not to mention the fact that the administrative jumble makes everything harder.”<sup>160</sup> The School of Modern Languages of Warsaw University asked the Kosciuszko Foundation if it could receive a grant from the Foundation “for buying scientific books, textbooks, for subscription of periodicals, for getting back numbers of microfilms.” It also inquired about possible scholarships for Polish students to study abroad.<sup>161</sup>

Leon Tyszkiewicz, the author of an essay on “The Doctrine and Movement of ‘Social Defense’ in Contemporary Criminal Law” published by the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, wrote to a sponsor: “I wish to thank the Italian Institution Esperienze Internazionali in Rome, whose invitation to France and Italy enabled the author to collect much material not available in Poland and to meet directly the creators of the doctrine of social defense.”<sup>162</sup> A psychologist wrote to the Librairie Polonaise in Paris: “I would like to express my admiration for the deed of sending books to scholars working here [in Poland]. It is a real help with our work for which we are grateful.”<sup>163</sup> The American Library in Paris transcribed into Braille books PSPD had provided for a blind student of economics at the Main School of Planning and Statistics in Warsaw.<sup>164</sup>

In a letter to the Kosciuszko Foundation, an important Polish tourist association indicated a desire to stimulate tourism in Poland. It urged adding a chapter on Poland to Olson’s travel guide to Europe, *Abroad and Abroad*, of which they had received a copy.<sup>165</sup> Polish visitors to the West told PSPD’s book distributors that books did arrive in Poland, but that people were afraid of acknowledging them. A visiting Polish historian told a Paris sponsor in January 1967: “I would like to assure you that books mailed by you to Poland are arriving, but please do not request acknowledgements.”<sup>166</sup> A professor of psychology at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań and a professor at the College

<sup>160</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1968, dated November 11, 1968, 3.

<sup>161</sup> February [1966] Highlights, dated March 9, 1966, 2.

<sup>162</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1968, dated January 15, 1969, 3.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> December [1963] Highlights, dated January 10, 1964, 3.

<sup>165</sup> May [1964] Highlights, dated June 10, 1964, 5.

<sup>166</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1967, dated March 17, 1967, 2.

of Economics in Poznań both wrote that the books they received were very valuable in preparing their lectures.<sup>167</sup> From an artist in Warsaw came the following letter: "Thank you so much for the charming surprise, *Le musée de l'impressionisme* [The museum of impressionism]. I believe the cultural exchange action fills one of the most urgent needs of our contemporary life."<sup>168</sup> The Union of Journalists in Warsaw, which regularly received *Le Figaro Littéraire*, wrote: "In the name of readers at our library, we are thankful for securing for us the subscription to this valuable magazine."<sup>169</sup> An economist in Warsaw, who received books on Arizona and Colorado, wrote: "The books are really wonderful [...] We are dreaming of owning a complete set of such books, covering every state of your country [...] We wish to take this opportunity to express out sincere regrets at the loss to the entire world of Senator Robert Kennedy, brother of the unforgettable John, the peace president and spokesman for coexistence of all political systems." *Głos Nauczycielski*, the weekly of the Teachers' Union in Warsaw, wrote: "We are terribly shocked by the death of Senator Robert Kennedy. How is it possible?"<sup>170</sup> *Annales de Lettres et Sciences Humaines* (XVI, No. 4), a publication of the Catholic University of Lublin, published an article attributing the richness of the library of the university's restricted Department of English Philology largely to the books received from organizations in the West, many of them sponsors of PSPD.<sup>171</sup>

The English librarian at the Higher School of Foreign Languages at the University of Warsaw wrote to the International Book Fellowship: "Under the spell of your request for individual letters, I have dictated them [his second-year students] the body of a letter and asked them to insert titles of two books most needed at the present moment. So, in a day or two, you will receive about 60 letters [...] If it is a bother, I beg to be excused; maybe I was acting too rashly? You may be sure, if you encourage me, I will make propaganda as much as I can."<sup>172</sup> A Warsaw historical writer, who received a biography of Jozef

<sup>167</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1968, dated July 22, 1968, 2.

<sup>168</sup> Highlights Report July–August 1967, dated September 10, 1967, 2.

<sup>169</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1968, dated March 14, 1968, 4.

<sup>170</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1968, dated July 22, 1968, 3.

<sup>171</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1969, dated July 11, 1969, 3.

<sup>172</sup> Highlights Report December 1969, dated January 7, 1970, 3.

Piłsudski from the Kosciuszko Foundation in New York, informed the foundation that his own book, *Żołnierz Samotnej Gwiazdy* (Lone star soldier), had been accepted for publication by *Nasza Księgarnia* in Warsaw. The book was a biography of Andrzej Feliks Wardziński, a hero of the Texan War of Independence of 1836, in which he fought under General Sam Houston. The author was looking into the possibility of publishing his book in an English translation in the U.S.<sup>173</sup> A professor of labor law at the University of Warsaw wrote: “I owe a great deal to you directly, and indirectly through my younger colleagues who have also been beneficiaries of your service. Now once more one of my graduate students is working with your books, which he could never have seen had it not been for you. I don’t believe his doctoral thesis could ever have been written without you.”<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>174</sup> Bi-monthly Report September–October 1970, George C. Minden undated IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, 1 July to December 31, 1970, 4. HIA, Minden Collection, Box 1.

## CHAPTER 15

# Letters from Czechoslovakia Before and After 1968

Because censorship was most severe and cautiousness prevailed in Czechoslovakia, responses barely trickled in when the book program was launched: 12 responses in the last five months of 1956, 103 by the end of 1957, and a cumulative total of 1,142 by the end of 1959. From 1960 onwards, responses and requests doubled every year. Following the de-Stalinization of 1963, requests surged forward, jumping from close to 1,000 in 1962 to some 3,500 in 1963. On average, it took three months from the time a book was mailed to the time an acknowledgement of receipt was received. Moreover, European publishers seldom forwarded the letters they received immediately, and sometimes held on to them for months. The summer vacation period also tended to slow down the movement of mail. Requests reached over 10,000 in 1965 and over 16,000 during 1967. During the same year, the receipt of over 15,000 books and periodicals was acknowledged, as compared to approximately 10,000 in 1965.

Between January and August 1968, the month of the Warsaw Pact invasion and occupation of Czechoslovakia, 18,371 books were acknowledged and 20,293 requested.<sup>1</sup> The invasion had no obvious effect on the book mailing operations targeting Czechoslovakia. Except for the first week or so after the invasion, postal services were not dis-

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<sup>1</sup> Publications and Special Projects Division, Book Center, Monthly Report No. 145, August 1968, 1–2. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Microfiche Provisional Box 3. Unless otherwise indicated, all letter quotations originate from this source.

rupted, and first-class airmail was generally delivered within three or four days. A few letters dated around the end of August said that "mail is normal again" or that "post offices are accepting mail again." A large number of requests (exactly 4,407) were received during the two months following the invasion, indicating that the Czechoslovak people were not willing to sever their links with the West.<sup>2</sup> Czechoslovakia's "normalization" under Gustáv Husák had no evident effect on the book mailing project. Even highly political books were acknowledged by their recipients and requested by both organizations and individuals. Mail continued to flow normally. First-class airmail took about a week between the U.S. and Czechoslovakia, slightly less to and from Western Europe. Correspondents wrote without hesitation, and several were very outspoken in damning the Soviet action against their country.<sup>3</sup>

A number of correspondents were puzzled as to the source which was making the books available and asked how their names and addresses had been obtained, how the sponsor knew what their interests were, and why it sent them gifts. One wrote: "I cannot account for your idea to send just me any books, but I am very content [...] how did you get my address?"<sup>4</sup> A Prague institute sent a brief inquiry: "We would be very pleased to gain more information about the organization you are running."<sup>5</sup> Two letters sent to a Paris sponsor assumed that the program was associated with UNESCO. One said: "A friend of mine who spoke with you during his recent visit to Paris told me you send to various countries books published in various other countries. I do not know if this information is accurate and under what form this UNESCO aid is carried out."<sup>6</sup>

*Praise for the book program.* A professor extended his "belated good wishes for the work you are doing [...] May it develop under more auspicious conditions than hitherto and contribute to the much needed international understanding."<sup>7</sup> A student wrote to Interpress Ltd.

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<sup>2</sup> Highlights Reports September–October 1968, dated November 11, 1968, 7.

<sup>3</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1968, dated January 15, 1969, 7.

<sup>4</sup> April [1964] Highlights, dated May 5, 1964, 1.

<sup>5</sup> December [1964] Highlights, dated January 11, 1965, 5.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> February [1964] Highlights, dated March 6, 1964, 1.

in London that until recently, he had been completely cut off from the West, but now, with the sponsor's help, he could begin studying Western problems.<sup>8</sup>

Czechs complained especially about currency restrictions, and recipients unable to pay were eager to offer exchanges.<sup>9</sup> In October 1963, one correspondent wrote that Czech citizens would be free to travel abroad as of January 1964, but they could only take out a limited amount of currency. A correspondent who received a reference catalogue was bitter about not being able to get such books in Czechoslovakia. "I do not like to get some reference catalogue because I am only angry from it if I know that some books exist in the world which I can never buy because it is not possible to get them in our book shops. I believe you know we are living in two different worlds. You in a feudal-capitalist world and we in the socialist world. So your catalogue is as valuable for me as the hieroglyphical calendar from ancient Egypt for you in England. Please sir, excuse my bitterness."<sup>10</sup> The head of a medical institute in Karlovy Vary who received *Psychiatry Today* by David Stafford-Clark wrote: "Especially because of restrictions existing nowadays in cultural and scientific exchanges between West and East—this is a great help in our work." And a psychiatrist said: "Your activity must be greatly appreciated especially in East-European countries [...] In all East-European countries, the severe restrictions of payments abroad make it nearly impossible to get into contact with Western literature."<sup>11</sup>

In the spring of 1967, there were indications that Western books and periodicals were becoming more easily available. The French library at the E. Denis Institute in Prague was reopened, and according to *Le Monde* of April 20, 1967, 10,000 volumes published after 1952 were added to the library's collection. According to the Prague daily

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<sup>8</sup> May [1964] Highlights, dated June 10, 1964, 1. Many letters, mostly from students learning English, asked for "pen friends" to correspond with.

<sup>9</sup> Some people believed or pretended to believe they had to pay for the books sent to them, perhaps because of playing it safe with the censors. Even if the desire to pay was genuine, they did not have the necessary foreign currency and offered to exchange books instead—a standard practice on the part of many institutions.

<sup>10</sup> July [1964] Highlights, dated August 10, 1964, 3.

<sup>11</sup> March [1966] Highlights, dated April 11, 1966, 8.



*Svobodné slovo* (Free word), 40 Western newspapers and periodicals were to be sold in hotels under the management of the ČEDOK tourist agency beginning May 1, 1967. The letters received, however, continued to stress the high cost of Western books and periodicals, making it impossible for most people to obtain them. A Prague engineer wrote: "Under present conditions in Czechoslovakia it is possible to buy some professional literature in English in local bookshops, however the price of these books exceeds five times their normal value." A professor stated: "For us, for people living in the East this action of yours is very advantageous because we have no dollars or other material for gaining new knowledge of all the beings from all the world [sic]."<sup>12</sup>

The Czechoslovak government was trying to create the impression that Western books were now available. An article in the May 6, 1967 issue of *Literární noviny* stated: "It is now possible to buy a considerable number of Western books through the State Publishing House of Technical Literature, including fashion magazines, cook books, expensive art books, and specialized scientific and technical literature (with the exception of belles lettres the need of which has not yet been recognized)." Yet a partial list of the books on sale at the Permanent Exhibition of World Scientific and Professional Literature in Prague, which one of the sponsors obtained, showed that the prices were about four times higher than the official exchange rate. And letters from both individuals and institutions continued to bewail the lack of books. A man in Prague wrote: "It is impossible here to buy French books in the ordinary manner, as was the case in the past."<sup>13</sup> Another correspondent wrote: "We can buy some technical books and artistic [sic] topics, but still no poetry, literature works (novels, criticism), art magazines and newspapers, printed in English."<sup>14</sup> A student, who received books on English literature and wanted more, wrote: "Don't think me impolite, but you are my only source in getting the most wonderful books."<sup>15</sup> A student at the Prague Higher School of Economics stated: "My colleagues and me can't get any books of economics of Western countries and of Western economists, your society, industry, planning, democ-

<sup>12</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1967, dated May 10, 1967, 8.

<sup>13</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1967, dated July 18, 1967, 9.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>15</sup> September [1965] Highlights, dated October 8, 1965, 6.

racy [sic], political thought, marketing, uses and abuses of industrial and social psychology [...] in short, about your business life.”<sup>16</sup>

*The use of gift lists.* The trend of increasing responses from individuals was reinforced by a gift list offering limited choices from selected titles, mailed by the International Advisory Council. Previously, these lists had elicited little or no responses, but the list sent by registered mail was answered with enthusiasm.<sup>17</sup> The substantial reaction to this gift list also reflected the growing success of the book project. An IAC offer elicited 102 responses for 243 lists sent to Czechoslovakia.<sup>18</sup> One such gift list, containing the works of American authors, was sent in by a Czech doctor in Ghana. Thanks to the gift list, the number of individuals requesting books in November was nearly double the total of October. 1964 saw a marked increase in the number of spontaneous requests for books from individuals of various professions, who had heard from friends of the IAC and its gift orders. This clearly showed that the book program was reaching more and more people, and also that people were less afraid to show their interest in requesting books from the West.

The gift lists, mailed at the rate of 50–100 per month since January 1964, were obviously circulated from person to person, resulting in an increasing number of spontaneous requests from people who had heard from friends or colleagues about the book program in this manner. Many of these requests came from students, who wrote to IAC and other PSPD sponsors, stressing their interest in the English language, modern English and American literature, and American life in general. They elicited no less than 44 responses in March 1964, including a Photostat copy someone had made, and several from friends of the addressees.<sup>19</sup> By the spring of 1964, professors and students accounted for one-third of all Czech and Slovak respondents. Another IAC gift list form sent in 1965 elicited 44 forms filled out and

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<sup>16</sup> Monthly Report November–December 1970, 7, George C. Minden undated IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, 1 July to December 31, 1970, 5.

<sup>17</sup> April [1963] Highlights, dated May 6, 1963, 3.

<sup>18</sup> October [1963] Highlights, dated November 8, 1963, 1.

<sup>19</sup> April [1964] Highlights, dated May 5, 1964, 2.

returned out of 60 mailed.<sup>20</sup> The recipient could select five titles of which he would receive three, and in April 1965 alone, requests for 243 books came in. Another form offering a selection of books in stock was also very successful. 100 forms were mailed in March and 80 letters of requests were sent by the end of April.<sup>21</sup>

Attempts to expand mailing lists by asking regular correspondents to suggest the names of people who would like to receive books revealed some fears. An interesting reaction from Prague: "I approached several persons who wish, I am sure, to keep abreast of cultural achievements abroad, but have to confess that several people here are still anxious to avoid any troubles that used to arise sometimes in the past for those whose contact with abroad was notorious. However a more sensible attitude seems to prevail now, and so I recommend you the two friends below."<sup>22</sup>

In 1966, 175 copies of a new gift book order form were mailed. By March, 79 replies had been received requesting a total of 368 books, including 36 requests for Webster's *New World Dictionary* and 25 for the *Columbia-Viking Desk Encyclopedia*. Many of the titles requested dealt with some aspect of American life, history, and music, such as Arthur Schlesinger's *A Thousand Days* and *The Age of Roosevelt*, the Warren Commission Report, LeRoi Jones's *Blues People*, etc. In April, 150 new names were added to the Czechoslovak mailing list. People asking for books for the first time often stressed their interest in the U.S. and in American culture, and mentioned the lack of such books in Czechoslovakia and the unavailability of foreign currency. In March, the International Book Fellowship in London received acknowledgements from students for 74 books and requests for 364 more, and 57 more letters in April. Many of these were spontaneous requests, as new students heard of IBF via word-of-mouth from friends.<sup>23</sup>

Another gift book order form offered a choice of books from a list of 19 titles (short stories, dictionaries) and asked the recipients to give the names of friends and colleagues who would also like to

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<sup>20</sup> March [1965] Highlights, dated April 5, 1965, 5.

<sup>21</sup> April [1965] Highlights, dated May 4, 1965, 6.

<sup>22</sup> December [1965] Highlights, dated January 13, 1966, 9.

<sup>23</sup> March [1966] Highlights, dated April 11, 1966, 8, and April [1966] Highlights, dated May 11, 1966, 6-7.

receive the offer. Twenty replies arrived following the mailing of the first 50 offers, chiefly to schools and institutes, but the chain reaction produced a total of 228 new names for the Czech mailing list, the majority of them in provincial towns and villages, and only 20% in large cities. PSPD planned to mail some 400 copies of the offer.<sup>24</sup> The majority of the spontaneous requests were addressed to the sponsors in Europe rather than in the U.S. IBF reported a heavy response to its mailing of a new gift book order form offering a choice of books on English literature, language, art, and philosophy. "The reaction to the latest round of offers from a new list has been overwhelming. We have some 600 unfulfilled requests to be dealt with. About 150 are for C. E. Eckersley's *Essential English for Foreign Students*." In one instance, 30 identical letters were received from high school students in Prague. "I got your address from my teacher [...] I hear that *Essential English* is an ideal textbook and as I learn English I would be very glad to have it."<sup>25</sup>

In 1967, PSPD began to use a new sponsor it created in New York, *Books of the World*, for the mailing of a new gift book list. The initial offer listed 19 books for young readers, and asked the recipients to select five titles with the understanding that they would receive two of the five. Mailing of the offer began in June, and the first reply arrived from the Economics High School in Dečín, Bohemia, which listed five other addressees who would like to receive the offer.<sup>26</sup> Many spontaneous letters continued to arrive from people who had heard from one source or another about the availability of books. One secondary school teacher in Ostrava wrote she had seen three volumes on American history in her town library, and asked for books. PSPD had sent the library a 12-volume work on American history published by Time-Life. An art student in Bratislava wrote to IBC in New York: "I learned your address from my colleague who is a member of British International Book Centre [...] am not quite sure whether your Book Center is the same but I should like to become your member." She added that that in September she would start her post-graduate studies in the U.S., concentrating on English and American literature.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1968, dated March 14, 1968, 12.

<sup>25</sup> Highlights Report July–August 1967, dated September 10, 1967, 6.

<sup>26</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1967, dated July 18, 1967, 10.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

*Interest in America.* A Prague correspondent requested *America and the World of Our Time* by Jules Davids and wrote to the author: "I am very interested in present-day international relations and foreign policy of nations, and do not believe that your world and policy are so wrong, like our politicians claim: I would like to read more books for these causes."<sup>28</sup> A correspondent who admitted that he would never go to the U.S. because he was not a member of the political "union" lauded cultural exchanges that allowed him to study American "examples."<sup>29</sup> A professor asking for more books on modern American painting wrote: "I could make a good propaganda for American painting and American spiritual [sic] life."<sup>30</sup>

A Prague correspondent wrote: "I should like to know something about the American life at the present time. Please has existed some journal about it? [...] In this country we have no special journals about the present American life and no opportunity to receive them."<sup>31</sup> From a medical student in Bratislava: "Our university library has some American and English medical books and many sorts of medical journals, but nothing in general about people and country in America. My effort aims at the serious knowledge of English through the reading of books about people and life in your country."<sup>32</sup> A correspondent in Prague who had received Richard Hofstadter's *American Political Tradition* wrote: "I have read the book very carefully to get acquainted with the tradition of American political thinking. Namely, as I have a chance to receive a scholarship at some of the American universities and to come to the U.S. in this autumn, I know that more, broader, and deep[er] information on American life, government, and social institutions, on economic principles ruling the American society, is necessary to comprehend well the American people's point of view."<sup>33</sup>

A few critical letters were also received. A physician in Nitra sent the first comment on the Vietnam War: "Your organization and your effort enable us to be acquainted with some works of American lit-

<sup>28</sup> June [1964] Highlights, dated July 17, 1964, 4.

<sup>29</sup> May [1963] Highlights, dated June 6, 1963, 2.

<sup>30</sup> March [1963] Highlights, dated April 8, 1963, 1.

<sup>31</sup> March [1965] Highlights, dated April 5, 1965, 6.

<sup>32</sup> April [1966] Highlights, dated May 11, 1966, 6.

<sup>33</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1967, dated May 10, 1967, 9.

erature, art, and history [...] On the other side, be not angry, I must say that the foreign policy of your country in Vietnam last year seems to me to be the very opposite of your efforts of international understanding. Many people in our country who acknowledge American success in many branches of human activity, hate war and condemn it as a way of solving international problems.”<sup>34</sup> A correspondent in Písek commented on the American standard of living and stated: “I think that American workers should not make their lives harder by unreasonable acts (i.e. strikes). If they knew conditions elsewhere in the world, they would be amazed to see how much better off they are than others.”<sup>35</sup>

A woman in Prague wrote: “I like your nation and I am deeply sorry for the loss you have now experienced at the death of Robert Kennedy. I have been thoroughly interested in the life and thoughts of the late John F. Kennedy, reading his *Profiles in Courage*, now being at last prepared for the Czech edition, and therefore Robert Kennedy meant much to me as well as to our nation.”<sup>36</sup> A teacher in a small town in Bohemia, who had received an illustrated book on New York, wrote: “I shall use it among my students as the illustration of my lectures about this country. And besides, it’s the only way to see the pictures of the country of my dreams [...] I love Anglo-American literature [...] but I know that never in my life I shall get to Great Britain or the USA, although I have been longing for it above all.”<sup>37</sup>

U.S. space exploits were mentioned by a number of correspondents, especially Apollo X and the flight to and landing on the moon. One young man wrote: “I don’t think there is better proof of your progress than your success in the trips to the space [...] I wish you next lucky steps and will listen to the Voice of America, because for me it’s the voice of sincerity.”<sup>38</sup> A student in Olomouc asked for the “Apollo

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<sup>34</sup> February [1966] Highlights, dated March 9, 1966, 7.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1968, dated July 22, 1968, 12. As of June 30, 1968, 41 of the 80 copies of *We the People: The Story of the U.S. Capitol* by Allan Nevine et al., and 11 of the 30 copies of *Voting in Democracies* by Enid Lakeman and J. D. Lambert, mailed to Czechoslovakia, had been acknowledged.

<sup>37</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1967, dated July 18, 1967, 9.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

11-Special (Touchdown on the Moon),” a commemorative issue of *Look* magazine, and for information on where he could “obtain some more expert publication about project Apollo and American cosmics [sic].”<sup>39</sup>

*Literature.* Interest in Western literature, languages, history, art, architecture, religion, and philosophy remained strong and not limited to the recipient’s professional area. In mid-1963, 88% of Czech requests were in these categories. A university lecturer in English literature confessed that his knowledge of modern literature and of recent works of many American poets, novelists, and dramatists was very limited. “Unfortunately, all my information is second-hand and I know nearly nothing except the names of these authors or some titles of their works.”<sup>40</sup> A university professor in charge of the department of English and American literature wrote: “There is a desperate lack of English and American books here, of contemporary authors in particular, but at the same time I am expected to be up to date as a matter of course.”<sup>41</sup>

The following letters show the keen interest in the U.S. and in American literature and the eagerness to receive literary works. “My family and I are very interested in the USA literature and it is a good thing that your organization gives an opportunity to help us get acquainted with it.” A recipient from Gottwaldov wrote: “The book shall be a great asset to me because of the lack of American literature in our country.” And another recipient from Stipa said: “Your help would overcome the shortage of books on modern American authors.”<sup>42</sup> An English professor thanked for a collection of essays and literary criticisms from the *Times Literary Supplement*, and wrote: “Let me assure you that it will not only be carefully studied, but then put in the library of the English Department of Palacký University (in Olomouc), of which I am a senior lecturer, and reviewed by me in our leading literary journal. Any book on English and American literature, any good novel, collection of poetry, etc. will be made full use of, reviewed and put on the shelves of our library. There is a great shortage

<sup>39</sup> Highlights Report September 1969, dated October 6, 1969, 8.

<sup>40</sup> June [1964] Highlights, dated July 17, 1964, 4.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Both quotes from January [1965] Highlights, dated February 5, 1965, 5.



of this kind in this country and every shipment like the present one is a small treasure.”<sup>43</sup>

Jozef Škvorecký, a writer whose book *Cowards* was banned, requested works on American literature to help him with an article on F. Scott Fitzgerald for the Prague bi-monthly *World Literature*.<sup>44</sup> A 20-year old student of English and Russian asked for Hemingway’s *Farewell to Arms* and explained: “To compare the American original with the Czech edition is both interesting and also very important for us, the future translators.”<sup>45</sup> Letters came from several students at the University of 17<sup>th</sup> November in Prague, training young people in Marxist thinking. One of them wrote: “I am as student of English and German at the University of 17<sup>th</sup> November and I am mainly interested in modern American literature and photography. In our country it is impossible to buy modern American fiction in original.”<sup>46</sup>

A translator in Most, Bohemia, asked for William Styron’s *Set This House on Fire* and wrote that he would like to offer the book for translation into Czech. A translator in Prague who received several books wrote that he was sure to be able to translate some of Updike’s short stories into Czech. He felt that Czech publishing houses might be very interested in works by Herbert Read, T. S. Eliot, and Jerome K. Jerome, and mentioned that Read’s *Education Through Art* appeared in his translation in November 1967.<sup>47</sup> A recipient of J. D. Salinger’s *Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters* wrote: “I would like to assure the author of the book that this kind of psychological problems is far from being unknown in this part of the world, maybe some of our experiences are even sharper.”<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1967, dated March 17, 1967, 6.

<sup>44</sup> December [1965] Highlights, dated January 13, 1966, 6. Jozef Škvorecký (1924–2012), a leading contemporary Czech writer and publisher and a long-time supporter of Czech dissidents, fled to Canada after the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. He retired from the University of Toronto in 1990.

<sup>45</sup> February [1965] Highlights, dated March 5, 1965, 5.

<sup>46</sup> April [1965] Highlights, dated May 4, 1964, 6.

<sup>47</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1968, dated July 22, 1968, 11. Of 50 copies of *Great American Essays* edited by Norman Cousins, 45 had been acknowledged by June 30. Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> September [1964] Highlights, dated October 6, 1964, 4.



From another correspondent came the following inquiry: "I would be pleased to get as much modern intellectual literature and drama as possible [...] Titles tell me little. Except for the great ones and the classics, I can hardly tell a name. Is there not a kind soul among your editors who could help a hungry and well-read mind? I will be in London after New Year. Could I consult you?"<sup>49</sup> A translator wrote: "I am glad to let you know that the book you sent me (Truman Capote, *In Cold Blood*) will be published next year by our greatest publishing house Odeon." He asked for William Styron's *Set This House on Fire* and said he wanted to recommend it for translation, adding that it had already been translated into Hungarian and Polish.<sup>50</sup> A student in Trenčín, Western Slovakia, who had received *The American Folk Scene* by David A. De Turk and A. Poulin, noted, "It is almost impossible for us to get American books."<sup>51</sup> An engineer in Prague wrote: "Through some kind of cultural agreement between your country and mine a whole department of English literature (science fiction as well as magazines) was donated to the Charles University library for public use—an event appreciated by the Prague inhabitants, i.e. its part understanding English, to an extent unimaginable by the donor."<sup>52</sup>

*German books.* The first responses received by the Stiasny Verlag, a Vienna publishing house and PSPD sponsor since 1963, were more discursive and less guarded, perhaps because of the cultural ties between Austria and Czechoslovakia. One correspondent wrote: "Even in the Neuengamme concentration camp, I lived for some time with a German journalist from Prague [...] We both worked as roofers on a high roof where we were away from the SS men who watched us and we would talk about literature, aesthetics, and philosophy."<sup>53</sup> The cultural editor of the weekly *Kulturní tvorba* (Cultural creation) asked for a number of books on West Germany, explaining that he had traveled

<sup>49</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1967, dated March 17, 1967, 8.

<sup>50</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1968, dated March 14, 1968, 9.

<sup>51</sup> Highlights Report December 1969, dated January 7, 1970, 10.

<sup>52</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1967, dated November 10, 1967, 9.

<sup>53</sup> September [1964] Highlights, dated October 15, 1964, 4.

through that country and was preparing “a large book on German literature, art, and on how life functions in Germany.”<sup>54</sup>

*French literature.* The head of the Foreign Section of the Association of Czechoslovak Writers acknowledged books on criticism and on the general literary debate going on in France, and wrote: “The theme fascinates me and I am going to write a study on the present state of French literary criticism, which should be published in the magazine *Svetová literatúra* (World literature) or in *Impuls*.” He also asked for more French books on the subject.<sup>55</sup> A Slovak translator in Bratislava, the wife of the poet Jan Kostra, wrote that she had just finished translating Simone de Beauvoir’s *Les mandarins* and was helping her husband translate Baudelaire’s “*Les fleurs du mal*.” Hence, she concluded, “to receive French books is for us always a great event.”<sup>56</sup> Several provincial libraries accepted the weekly supplements of *Le Monde* and the magazine *Réalités*.

A new sponsor, who mailed books from Spain, sparked Czech interest in Spanish works.<sup>57</sup> A teacher in Bratislava requested several French books, including *Garaudy* by Serge Perrotino and *Les étapes de la croissance économique* by Walt W. Rostow, and noted in French: “It is not easy to obtain French books—I ordered several through the bookshop but received only one after 18 months. As for newspapers, only *L’Humanité* [organ of the French Communist Party] is on sale.”<sup>58</sup>

*Language, Textbooks, and Education.* English language textbooks and dictionaries were always in great demand because there was a severe lack of them in Czechoslovakia. Students and teachers requested books on a variety of subjects, most frequently on the English language and literature. Language textbooks in particular elicited many responses and requests. An English teacher wrote to a London sponsor: “It is

<sup>54</sup> December [1964] Highlights, dated January 11, 1965, 6.

<sup>55</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1967, dated March 17, 1967, 7.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> August [1963] Highlights, dated September 6, 1963, 2.

<sup>58</sup> Bi-monthly Report July–August 1970, 12, George C. Minden undated IAC Report on Book Distribution, 1 July to December 31, 1970, 5. HIA, Minden Collection, Box 1.

sometimes difficult for a teacher to keep abreast with particularly more recent literature. We can, of course, get some English and American books from the Soviet bookshop here, but the choice is not so wide as it should be.”<sup>59</sup> Another teacher: “My pupils are really anxious to get in touch with British children and they look up to your nation with great respect [...] Our young people need to know about life and development in England and improve their knowledge of the English language [...] They have little opportunity to do so.”<sup>60</sup>

The widely popular four-volume *Essential English* by C. E. Eckersley alone elicited 78 requests in the first two months of 1967, and 58 people acknowledged its receipt. A writer in Prague asked for dictionaries and an English grammar book, and wrote: “There are no such books to be had in our country. I should be very happy to have them because it would help me a great deal in my profession [...]” From a high school teacher came the following letter: “There is a great lack of books concerning today-spoken English here and nothing at all about literature and contemporary authors.”<sup>61</sup> A couple in Příbram in Bohemia wrote that they were teaching in the local house of culture using “our and Russian textbooks,” and asked for several English language textbooks “dealing with modern methods.”<sup>62</sup>

A woman in the provincial town of Přerov in Moravia who received a gift book offer wrote: “There is in Přerov a little English speaking club visited by those who want to brush up their English. I brought your kind proposition to a meeting and many members would like to receive some of the books.” She gave the names of eight friends and concluded: “Looking forward to a beautiful sign of friendship from [...] faraway America.”<sup>63</sup> There were many other English clubs, such as the one in Ostrava, where a correspondent wrote that he would probably lend F. J. Monkhouse’s *North American Landscape* to “the English circle in our town where the friends of the English and American culture are organized.”<sup>64</sup> A teacher in Gottwaldov wrote:

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<sup>59</sup> February [1966] Highlights, dated March 9, 1966, 6.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>61</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1967, dated March 17, 1967, 6.

<sup>62</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1967, dated May 10, 1967, 9.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

“One of our big problems is insufficient personal contacts with people living in the principal English-speaking countries. Another problem is to learn of the progress made in your country in the field of teaching languages in general. Can you help somehow with these problems or perhaps suggest some institution that can? Some 30 years ago I began working in this field with the idea of making English the No. 1 international language in Europe. I still think it can be done.”<sup>65</sup> He proved to be a good prophet.

One correspondent sent a list of thirteen people who would be interested in receiving books and in making “personal contacts” with the U.S. He wrote: “They all learn English, some of them have a good knowledge of it [...] Before the last war it seemed quite natural to me that men had numerous opportunities to learn to know the whole world from personal contacts [...] At present I sometimes get the disturbing feeling that our sons and their sons are in danger of being deprived of such glorious privilege that enhances the value of man’s life.”<sup>66</sup> A philology student in Gottwaldov (today again Zlín) wrote: “In spite of the fact that I want to know how to speak good English, I have no occasion to improve my knowledge of English. I have not been able to go to English-speaking countries and there is also a great shortage of English books in our country. There are for sale only books published by [the] Publishing House of [the] International Relations Institute in Moscow.”<sup>67</sup> A teacher in Prague wrote: “Being a staff teacher of the [state] School of Languages in Prague, I really miss the possibility of getting reference books, textbooks, dictionaries from England which are essential for my work. I also wrote textbooks of English for Czech students—with the help of English people living in our country, of course. Therefore I should be happy if I could get some books from you.”<sup>68</sup>

A teacher of English in Satalice (a district of Prague) gave his views on the importance of English as an international language. “I have a list of at least 200 English expressions unconsciously used by people in Czech. Recently, [a] similar situation can be witnessed in the electronic computer field I work in because we readily accept terms

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<sup>65</sup> February [1965] Highlights, dated March 5, 1965, 5.

<sup>66</sup> May [1965] Highlights, dated June 8, 1965, 5.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

like 'hardware, software, on-line, etc.' without making any efforts to seek for the Czech equivalent—the English ones are better fitting and shorter [...] I am really going to use up the contents of the books received, not to have them pigeon-holed in my library [...] For this reason, I did not select books that would be tailored strictly to my taste but rather textbooks that could be used for the benefit of others."<sup>69</sup>

Next to the interest in learning English, there were also many students writing about travel to the West, particularly to England. One student who received *A Book of English Idioms* and a *Penguin Encyclopedia* said: "Now because you are the only friends I have in England [...] I want you to share my great joy. I have the possibility to visit England. Can you imagine it?" She asked the sponsor's help in finding a job for her in the interval between her stay at two summer camps in England.<sup>70</sup> The Academy of Music and Drama in Bratislava wrote to Harper & Row thanking them for *American Colleges*. "We are preparing a journey in the USA in September for our students and teachers and your book has therefore been of great help to us."<sup>71</sup>

From a school in Pardubice came the following letter: "We have opened teaching of English at our elementary school and it is really trouble to work without good guides and books. [The] English language is the only international one and it makes us to do more because of this." A teacher in Bratislava wrote: "In our country there is nowadays a tremendous interest in learning English and studying American life, history, and economics. However, there is a serious shortage of literature relating hereto and also [a] lack of English teachers. Teaching English as an assistant teacher at a secondary school, I should be very obliged to you for sending me *This is America's Story* by Howard Wilder."<sup>72</sup> A teacher in Dečín, Northern Bohemia, wrote: "I am going to build up an English Club here. There are many people who know English but have no possibility of using it, and they forget very soon all they learned. So I want to help them by giving them a place where English will always be spoken, where they will find English, American, and Australian magazines (those I'll get

<sup>69</sup> Highlights Report July–August 1967, dated September 10, 1967, 7.

<sup>70</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1967, dated May 10, 1967, 9.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1968, dated July 22, 1968, 12.

from my friends abroad), and books written in English. And I will give there the books I get from you.”<sup>73</sup>

A lecturer at the Teacher Training College in Nitra requested 29 works, explaining: “There is a great interest in learning English as a second language among our students [...] Recently, a new English language section has been opened [here]. Our library is empty. We are short of books on grammar, phonetics, literature, and history.” The first secretary of the district committee of the Czech Socialist Academy, a popular-education institution in Chrudím, Eastern Bohemia, asked for several textbooks, explaining that his institution had arranged English courses for children from the age of nine, “but there are no good textbooks for these courses in our country.”<sup>74</sup>

A language teacher entrusted with vocational training at the Institute of Commercial Education in Plzeň, where language courses were given for business people, hotel employees, waiters, and cooks, wrote: “The English language finds much favor here. We prefer textbooks, grammars, and dictionaries published in England. Books published in Great Britain are commended by our people.”<sup>75</sup> A high school language teacher in Bratislava wrote the following letter of gratitude to IBF in London: “I have no other possibility of thanking you except by teaching English with more zest and fervor. Believe me, there is no need to propagate the study of English in this country. The interest is so great that we are in need of a great number of teachers to cope with this ever increasing need. I consider your books as a kind of reward for all those who are doing their best to learn, often under very difficult circumstances. The knowledge of your language brings us to a better understanding of those ties that unite us and those obstacles that still separate us.”<sup>76</sup>

*Sociology. Sborník práci* (Collection of essays), published by the Faculty of Philosophy of Brno University, and the Institute of Scientific and Technical Information both acknowledged and requested books on

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Highlights Report November 1969, dated December 5, 1969, 8–9.

<sup>75</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1969, dated July 11, 1969, 8.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 9.

sociology.<sup>77</sup> The Institute of Rural Sociology and Agricultural History in Prague and the head of the Czechoslovak Sociological Society thanked for Talcott Parsons' *Essays in Sociological Theory*, and the latter requested Pitirim Sorokin's *Social and Cultural Mobility*, which he needed for his work.<sup>78</sup> The Prague literary weekly *Literární noviny* wrote: "The book [by Talcott Parsons] is of great interest to us as our paper now pays much attention to sociology."<sup>79</sup>

By the end of 1965, a growing number of responses to books on sociology were received. PSPD, which until then had only been in contact with the Czechoslovak Sociological Society in Prague, for the first time heard from the Slovak Sociological Society in Bratislava, as well as from individual sociologists. In acknowledging *Science and Politics*, a Prague sociologist wrote: "As you do not live in a socialist country, it must be a little difficult for you to conceive properly the collaboration and mutual penetrating of science and politics. This phenomenon is closely connected with the reality that the economic and social life is organized in agreement with scientific principles, too. Of course a boundary must be fixed in the theory."<sup>80</sup> A sociology professor in Prague thanked for the magazine *Sociologie du travail*, and promised: "I will systematically draw the attention of the readers to the periodicals to which I contribute to the *Sociologie du travail*. If you will send me this magazine throughout the year, I will omit no opportunity to include reviews and mentions of your magazine. I publish my articles in our review *Sociologický časopis* (Sociological magazine) and in *Podniková organizace* (Enterprise organization)."<sup>81</sup>

*Religion.* There was evidence that strong religious feelings had not been quenched in Czechoslovakia. Sponsors in Rome and Vienna received many letters from priests, young mothers, and even young people asking for books on religion and for missals. The Accademia Cristiana Cecoslovacca in Rome, a PSPD sponsor, mailed 100 copies of a pamphlet in Czech on Pope John Paul XXIII and received 80 responses,

<sup>77</sup> April [1965] Highlights, dated May 4, 1965, 6.

<sup>78</sup> October [1965] Highlights, dated November 1965, 7.

<sup>79</sup> November [1965] Highlights, dated December 21, 1965, 6.

<sup>80</sup> December [1965] Highlights, dated January 13, 1966, 8–9.

<sup>81</sup> Highlights Report July–August 1967, dated September 10, 1967, 5.



along with one spontaneous request for the pamphlet and other Academy publications.<sup>82</sup> The Accademia also published a booklet on the education of children, written by an unidentified Catholic bishop in Czechoslovakia. The manuscript was smuggled out of the country to Rome, and the Accademia sent copies back to Czechoslovakia.<sup>83</sup> A recipient of the booklet wrote a letter strongly critical of the suppression of religion by the communist regime. "Religion is taught in our schools, but parents must ask for it in a written application. There are sad cases when even Catholic parents do not submit this application just for stupid fear [...] Church conditions in our country are very bad. We in Bohemia and Moravia have not one bishop. Priests are subordinated to Church secretaries, many of them atheists."<sup>84</sup>

A Catholic teacher in Konice wrote to the Accademia: "My great concern is the lack of textbooks for the instruction of the Catholic religion. There are at present no textbooks available here. I need them for children attending the first through the last grades of school. In addition may I ask you for a small Latin/Czech missal."<sup>85</sup> Josef Beran, Archbishop of Prague, acknowledged a book to the Herold Verlag in Vienna: "My thanks to the publisher and also to the generous donor."<sup>86</sup> A woman in Brno asked for a book on the Pope's visit to the Holy Land, and wrote: "Many of our people are greatly prejudiced against the church and the holy Father. The reason is plain ignorance, lack of information [...] Many would like to believe but not being Catholic themselves, dare not enter the church on their own. A few Catholics will help, as everyone has more than enough of his own troubles. If we, the fortunate ones who can believe, were able to spread religious instructive literature (which is hard to obtain here) among the ones seeking the answers, surely our hopes would be higher than at present."<sup>87</sup>

<sup>82</sup> March [1964] Highlights, dated April 8, 1964, 4.

<sup>83</sup> June [1964] Highlights, dated July 17, 1964, 5.

<sup>84</sup> July [1964] Highlights, dated August 10, 1964, 3.

<sup>85</sup> February [1965] Highlights, dated March 5, 1965, 4.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 4. Josef Beran (1888–1969) was Archbishop of Prague (1946–1969) and Primate of the Roman-Catholic Church of Czechoslovakia. He was elevated to Cardinal in 1965.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.



The Secretary of the Methodist Church of Czechoslovakia gratefully acknowledged Cardinal Bea's book *The Unity of Christians*. The editor of *Lidová demokracie* (People's democracy), the daily of the Czechoslovak Catholic Party, a satellite of the Communist Party, wrote: "Many thanks for copies No. 22 and No. 23 of your weekly magazine *Die Furche* (The furrow), an Austrian Catholic publication] which interested me very much. I would be happy to receive your magazine regularly."<sup>88</sup> Letters were also received from the Peace Movement of the Catholic Clergy in Czechoslovakia, a communist-sponsored organization. The *Internationale Teilhard-Bibliographie* by Ladislaus Polgar was particularly well received, with 24 of the 30 copies mailed acknowledged. Acknowledgements for books in the *Carnets Teilhard* series published by Diffedit in Paris were received from the Institute of Philosophy in Prague, a Protestant theologian, the dean of a Catholic seminary, a priest who was also a sociologist, and a philosophy magazine in Brno.<sup>89</sup>

Books on religion were first mailed only to a few large church organizations so as not to cause difficulties for the smaller churches in Czechoslovakia. These books were then mailed to a wider audience and started eliciting letters from new respondents. A letter from Kalich (Chalice), a publishing house of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, acknowledged Sidney Burrell's *Role of Religion in Modern European History*. "As president of a Protestant publishing house, I take an extraordinary interest in books of this kind [...] Your suggestion for establishing cultural contact is very kind; we need such a contact urgently as at present, we lack information which is essential in our work."<sup>90</sup> A theology student in Prague, who had received some theological works from IBF, was astonished by the quantity of theological literature in England. "You may understand it easily as there are no books on theology here. We are only allowed to print some 'scripts' (mimeographed sheets) for our lectures and there is still want of them."<sup>91</sup>

<sup>88</sup> February [1965] Highlights, dated March 5, 1965, 5.

<sup>89</sup> March [1965] Highlights, dated April 5, 1965, 5.

<sup>90</sup> April [1965] Highlights, dated May 4, 1965, 7. Letters also came from the Baptist Union in Czechoslovakia, from Transciscus, a Protestant publishing house, and from the Protestant theological faculty in Prague. Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1967, dated January 18, 1968, 11.

Next to religion and theology, there was a growing interest in psychology, metaphysics, parapsychology, yoga, and mysticism. A student of comparative philosophy in Brno mentioned his interest in yoga and Buddhism. He wrote that after feeling for many years that he could not use his knowledge of these matters in his own country, he was able to give his first public talk on yoga in Bratislava two years ago, and afterwards visited many places in Czechoslovakia and published some articles in daily newspapers and popular magazines. "At present I am trying to break through the barrier of silence about these matters in our scientific circles. In January of this year, I succeeded in giving a lecture at the Oriental Institute in Prague on yoga, its essence and practice." The letter showed the changing atmosphere in Czechoslovakia, where a few years before it would have been impossible to give a lecture on such non-Marxist topics.<sup>92</sup>

The literary monthly *Tvar* (The face), published by a group of young intellectuals with Catholic leanings, ceased publication in January 1966. Former staff members managed to inform their Western friends of this fact. Two PSPD sponsors, a London and a German publisher, received letters stating: "We wish to inform you that our revue *Tvar* will not be issued in the year 1966. We are sorry to inform you that the publications you have announced have not reached us" [one was Tarsis's *Die Blaue Fliege*].<sup>93</sup> The March 1970 issue of *Informationen* in Munich reported that Dr. František Tomašek, the Apostolic Administrator of Prague, had established a new "post-Council" library for theologians in his episcopal palace. It already contained 4,000 selected works and some 200 periodicals from all over the world. The bishop received and acknowledged many books sent through the mail by PSPS sponsors, and always took books from distributors whenever he was in Rome.<sup>94</sup>

*Philosophy.* The May 1, 1963 issue of the theatre journal *Divadelní noviny* (Theatre news) carried an article attacking the lack of Western books on existentialism in Czechoslovakia. It complained that no socialist critic could criticize bourgeois philosophy without reading

<sup>92</sup> April [1966] Highlights, dated May 11, 1966, 7.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>94</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1970, dated March 10, 1970, 11.

it, and noted that even the USSR was better informed. A correspondent in Prague thanked for *Philosophy in America* edited by Max Black: "This book enables the reader to catch a glimpse of the current thought in the field of philosophy in the USA. Although through the medium of the authors from different American universities, the reader somehow gets also to feel the intellectual atmosphere of the respective institutions. For me, who [spent] a whole year at the University of Chicago in 1947, it was delightful to read the paper of Marshall Cohen, even if aesthetics were not my field."<sup>95</sup>

Good responses were received for books on economics and sociology, among others from the important History Institute of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, which acknowledged Pitirim Sorokin's *Modern Historical and Social Philosophies* and offered to exchange publications with the sponsor, the International Book Center.<sup>96</sup> A literary historian at the University of Bratislava who received *Disputation zwischen Christen und Marxisten* (Dispute between Christians and Marxists) wrote: "I am against any kind of dogmatism and must state quite frankly that I belong to those of our intelligentsia who are for a positive dialogue between various philosophical schools."<sup>97</sup>

*History.* A history student in Prague wrote: "Only by a pure chance have I learned about your existence [...] Being a student of history I know very well that I shall never have the possibility to know, or better say to learn, the view of the 'other side' unless I am helped as for example by you [...] If you would be so kind, then send me the *Second World War* by W. S. Churchill."<sup>98</sup> From a correspondent in a provincial town in Bohemia came the following inquiry: "I should like to have some publication of pictures which would give me new knowledge about the history of England [...] Our literature, which is procurable for us, is incomplete in majority and its gives the history of the United Kingdom from another view and a man gets wrong opinions."<sup>99</sup>

<sup>95</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1967, dated July 18, 1967, 9.

<sup>96</sup> September [1965] Highlights, dated October 8, 1965, 5.

<sup>97</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1967, dated November 10, 1967, 8.

<sup>98</sup> April [1966] Highlights, dated May 11, 1966, 7.

<sup>99</sup> Highlights Report July–August 1967, dated September 10, 1967, 7.

A member of the Institute of Physical Chemistry in Prague wrote to the IAC in New York that while taking part, during the summer of 1967, in the International School of Quantum Theory in Debrecen, Hungary, an English physicist gave him the catalogue *Paperbacks in Print 1965–66*. He was also told that books listed in the catalogue could be obtained from IAC and asked for some works on World War II, books by Churchill, and William Shirer's *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*. "I have little opportunity to read [such works] [...] One can find them in some big Czechoslovak libraries, but the general interest of these books is so great that they are really available only for experts-historians or politicians."<sup>100</sup>

A UNESCO-associated high school in Uheřské Hradiště, Southern Moravia, requested books on English language and literature as well as Churchill's *History of the English-Speaking People* and *The Second World War*. It described itself as "a Senior High School preparing pupils for university studies with an extended English language program. History is taught in English."<sup>101</sup> A member of the Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences asked for *Pod vládou národní fronty* (Under the banner of the national front) by Ladislav Feierabend, a volume of memoirs by a pre-1948 Czechoslovak politician, as well as for copies of *Proměny* and *Naše snahy* to be sent for him in care of a colleague in Vienna. He added: "I am also interested in any periodical that deals with Czechoslovak history, especially the latest [history]."<sup>102</sup>

*Art.* There was always a widespread interest in arts and art books and catalogues, as shown by many acknowledgements for *Modern Art* by William Gaunt, and requests for books on Miro, Modigliani, and others. The following letter reflects this: "For an artist, the kindness of the book mailings surpassed understanding, especially in Czechoslovakia."<sup>103</sup>

In the spring of 1964, indications reached PSPD of discontent on the part of Czech artists and intellectuals with what seemed to be

<sup>100</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1967, dated January 18, 1968, 10.

<sup>101</sup> Highlights Report July–August 1969, dated September 16, 1969, 8.

<sup>102</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1970, dated March 10, 1970, 8.

<sup>103</sup> July [1964] Highlights, dated August 10, 1964, 1.

a more rigid government policy toward modern art. A visiting art critic in Paris reported: "A drastic change has occurred within the Party concerning cultural matters. It was forbidden to exhibit abstract painting or to print articles on the subject. But the difficulty is that they are unable to find painters or critics who will condemn abstract painting. I was told that even critics who until now had cooperated with the regime refuse to publish articles against modern art. There seems to be general chaos. The change of direction seems to have occurred not only in painting but in all other disciplines—literature, the cinema, philosophy, etc. This presumably because younger scholars have begun to abandon the Marxist philosophy and are turning passionately to Sartre, Camus, Heidegger, etc."<sup>104</sup> A more open indication of the intellectuals' discontent with government policy was evident in a letter that was to appear in the forthcoming issue of *Svědectví*, the Czech exile publication in Paris. Written by intellectuals living in Czechoslovakia and smuggled via Vienna to Paris, the open letter criticized the Czech government's cultural policy as "dogmatic and Stalinist," and urged that it be liberalized.<sup>105</sup> Another indication of dissatisfaction was found in an article in issue No. 18, 1964 of the Prague literary weekly *Literární noviny* (Literary news). The author complained of the lack of Western literature in Czechoslovakia and asked for regular "exhibitions of Western books, as in Poland."<sup>106</sup>

The mailing of books in English on the cinema produced a good response. The Czechoslovak Film Institute wrote that they were "very pleased to receive the books [...] It was a kind surprise for us." A Prague correspondent who received Roger Manwell's *New Cinema in Europe* remarked: "From our point of view, we would just wish that a greater attention be paid to the Czech 'new wave' which does not seem to have reached its height yet and perhaps would deserve more than one page of the text." A woman in Bratislava asked for a book on pop art, saying: "Unfortunately there are no possibilities to procure this book in Czechoslovakia."<sup>107</sup>

<sup>104</sup> May [1964] Highlights, dated June 10, 1964, 4.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> January–February [1967] Highlights, dated March 17, 1967, 8, and October [1965] Highlights, dated November 8, 1965, 8.

The recipient of *Concise History of Modern Painting* by Herbert Read wrote: "This wonderful book changed hands several times already, as not only myself, but many of my friends as well, especially the younger ones, are eager to acquaint themselves with the actual trends of [...] modern art abroad."<sup>108</sup> An artist thanked for Waldo Rasmussen's *Two Decades of American Painting*, and added: "A group of young artists here in Pardubice prepares a symposium of plastic arts [...]" He explained that the exhibition was held each year under the name "Art-Chemo," and dealt with the use of chemical materials in the plastic arts.<sup>109</sup> A student of art history at Charles University in Prague, who received *The Purposes of Art* by Albert E. Elsen, wrote: "I don't know how I can reciprocate your great help in my studies. You cannot imagine, dear sirs, how difficult [it is] to study the arts of foreign countries without [the] possibility of buying the foreign books and other publications, due to the present restrictions of foreign countries and due to my own position as [a] non-party student."<sup>110</sup>

*Theatre.* Books on the theatre elicited interesting responses, especially *Samuel Beckett* by Hugh Kenner. An amateur theatre group in Brno wrote: "Your book is not in the wrong hands for next month our group will represent Czechoslovakia in the 1965 International Festival of Amateur Theatre in Monaco." Another letter said: "As a translator of Beckett in Czech, I am naturally very much interested in this book."<sup>111</sup> Interest in "theatre happenings" was also evident in the country. A correspondent requested some books on the subject: "This sort of modern art is not very well known in Czechoslovakia and despite of that there are groups of young people taking a great interest in what is called 'happening' and having no news about it from where it was born."<sup>112</sup>

A student wrote: "I have written an essay on Harold Pinter and am interested in Anglo-American drama in general, so that your book

<sup>108</sup> December [1965] Highlights, dated January 13, 1966, 9.

<sup>109</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1968, dated July 22, 1968. Of the 80 copies of *Chagall* by Werner Haftmann sent prior to the August 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion, 36 were acknowledged.

<sup>110</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1970, dated March 10, 1970, 10.

<sup>111</sup> March [1966] Highlights, dated April 11, 1966, 8.

<sup>112</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1967, dated March 17, 1967, 8.

(G. Wellwarth's *The Theatre of Protests and Paradox*) helped me very much. We discussed it in our literary circle at the English department of the faculty of philosophy at Charles University where I am studying Anglo-American and Spanish literatures."<sup>113</sup> Another student wrote to a German sponsor: "Such books [a book on German drama] are of help. The literature available here comes mostly from East Germany and owing to its one-sidedness it is hardly useful."<sup>114</sup>

*Music.* Requests from Czechoslovakia for material on jazz and jazz records showed a strong interest and enthusiasm, and stressed the scarcity of such books and records in Eastern Europe. A recipient of Harold Court Lander's *Negro Folk Music USA* wrote: "I am very happy that there are in the book so many examples of music, because it will be possible to play and sing it [...] That's the trouble of the jazz fans here, that neither jazz literature nor music nor American jazz records are available here."<sup>115</sup> A Czech youth sent a request for records he had heard in "some programs of a foreign radio station" which was "disturbed by the atmosphere and fading."<sup>116</sup>

The Beatles were extremely popular. A letter from Slovakia read: "Recently we started a club which is engaged in taping and collecting the compositions of the Beatles. You can surely see that is impossible to do a good tape from the radio, and therefore we want to ask you to send us some Beatles records."<sup>117</sup> From a recipient of Francis Newton's *The Jazz Scene* came the following letter: "Please accept my thanks for sending this book which was very interesting for me, especially the parts describing the present state of jazz musicians in the USA and in England. I think it is a very good way to show people, through good books, how other people in other countries live and think."<sup>118</sup> The Radio Free Europe jazz program "Trailer" received many letters asking for records and publications on jazz, as well as suggestions for music for the program. One of the letters passed on to PSPD came from a

<sup>113</sup> February [1965] Highlights, dated March 5, 1965, 5.

<sup>114</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1968, dated January 15, 1969, 9.

<sup>115</sup> September [1964] Highlights, dated October 15, 1964, 3.

<sup>116</sup> April [1963] Highlights, dated May 6, 1963, 3.

<sup>117</sup> March [1966] Highlights, dated April 11, 1966, 7.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.



jazz enthusiast who asked for records and the jazz magazine *Downbeat*. He wrote: "I wish I had a kind and rich uncle in the West who would keep me supplied with jazz records. I care for nothing else; I would even refuse a Mercedes car. Jazz is my life, my only dream [...]"<sup>119</sup>

Interpress Ltd. in London sent a record of modern music or jazz, together with an English language textbook, to young Czechs interested in modern music. Six records were sent, and one acknowledgement was received.<sup>120</sup> The editor of the Prague magazine *Melodie*, who had received A. B. Spellman's *Four Lives in the Bebop Business*, wrote: "I have known it already and am going to use it for a Czech anthology. The publisher will receive a contract through [a] Czech Literary Agency."<sup>121</sup>

A Prague correspondent who received several books on American music and jazz gave two books to the Czechoslovak Music Association, which "did not possess them and where several Czech composers with good knowledge of English are attaching high value to such an increment of their library. As far as the rest [of the books] are concerned, I would like to assure you that even if I might be prevented to start studying all of them immediately, they do not remain hidden, but most of the books received from you changed readers several times already, as several of my friends [...] are just as eager as I am to keep in touch with the cultural achievements abroad."<sup>122</sup> From a Czech woman composer, who had recently received a Czech government award "for outstanding performance," the Galerie Lambert in Paris received a tape of several of her compositions, all quite modern works. The PSPD Czech national editor tried to offer the music to various musical groups in New York for possible performances.<sup>123</sup>

*Science.* A correspondent who worked for the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences complained: "In Prague, one cannot buy your scientific publications. So the books you have sent are for me a present of great value [...] At present I am preparing another manual of scien-

<sup>119</sup> April [1965] Highlights, dated May 4, 1965, 7.

<sup>120</sup> March [1965] Highlights, dated April 5, 1965, 7.

<sup>121</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1967, dated November 10, 1967, 8.

<sup>122</sup> March [1965] Highlights, dated April 5, 1965, 6.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.



tific anthology.” He offered to send his manuscript for publication in English and also asked for information about the International Advisory Council, explaining that in Prague he could not find any information about it.<sup>124</sup>

In March 1966, *The World in 1984*, a collection of essays foreseeing developments in the next 20 years in science, technology, the arts, social sciences, and politics edited by Nigel Calder received the highest number of acknowledgements (59). The director of the Historical Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava wrote: “As the Slovak Academy of Sciences gave me the responsibility and the spreading of information about publications of the type you publish, I would be very obliged if you could send me further books of yours from the New Scientists series.”<sup>125</sup> A scientist from the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences wrote that he was preparing a manual on “scientific and technical terms on the basis of modern languages (Slavic languages, English, German, and French) [...] I could offer you the manuscript in English if you could publish it or recommend it to a publisher.”<sup>126</sup>

Radio Prague editor Jiří Pober complained on January 15, 1968, that according to a report issued by Radio Free Europe in Munich, Czechoslovak scientists were unable to order Western scientific books. He made this statement at the opening of an exhibition of second-hand books in Prague. The majority of the books exhibited, he said, were written in the nineteenth or early twentieth centuries, and few recent books were shown. He also mentioned that permission had been withdrawn to order the Western books on science that were part of the permanent exhibition of foreign books at the Center of Technical Literature in Prague.<sup>127</sup> In December 1969, IBF received six letters from engineers living in or near Bratislava who listed a total of 91 names and addresses, mostly of engineers, to whom they asked that book offer forms should be sent.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> January [1965] Highlights, dated February 5, 1965, 6.

<sup>125</sup> March [1966] Highlights, dated April 11, 1966, 7.

<sup>126</sup> February [1965] Highlights, dated March 5, 1965, 6.

<sup>127</sup> Highlights Report February–January 1968, dated March 14, 1968, 12.

<sup>128</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1970, dated March 10, 1970, 10.

*Medicine and psychology.* A recipient of *The New American Medical Dictionary* wrote: "We have had great difficulty in securing any specialized literature from your country."<sup>129</sup> A student of psychology said: "I have no possibilities to acquaint myself with English and American psychology which takes leading part in this field."<sup>130</sup> A sociologist in Bratislava, interested in the socio-psychological problems connected with industrial work, commented: "It is especially the problem of small groups in industry which has been considered by contemporary French psychologists. And here is the paradox—I know their work from bibliographic sources, but I have not succeeded in obtaining them and studying them in their original form."<sup>131</sup>

Acknowledgements were received for *Vocabulaire de la psychologie* by Henri Piéron from the following institutes: the Research Institute of Child Psychology and Patho-Psychology in Bratislava, the President of the Czechoslovak Sociological Society, the City Library of Prague, the Institute of Management Sciences in Prague, and several university professors and lecturers in Prague and in Bratislava.<sup>132</sup> The mailing of the *Deutsche Arztkalender 1965* (German physician's calendar 1965) in 100 copies to physicians and medical institutions elicited 50 acknowledgements.<sup>133</sup> A psychologist in Tabor received Rollo May's *Psychology and the Human Dilemma*, and wrote that he would propose it for translation to the Mladá Fronta publishing house in Prague.<sup>134</sup> A psychology student in Brno complained about textbooks in Czechoslovakia: "Unfortunately the books published on that subject [psychology] here don't reach the high standard of the ones published in the West countries. Most of the foreign books are translations from Russian, which are one-idea'd [sic] and dogmatically oriented."<sup>135</sup>

<sup>129</sup> March [1965] Highlights, dated April 5, 1965, 7.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>131</sup> April [1965] Highlights, dated May 4, 1965, 6.

<sup>132</sup> May [1965] Highlights, dated June 8, 1965, 5.

<sup>133</sup> November [1965] Highlights, dated December 21, 1965, 7.

<sup>134</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1968, dated July 22, 1968, 11.

<sup>135</sup> Monthly Report July–August 1971, 11, George C. Minden undated IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, 1 July to December 31, 1971, 5. HIA, Minden Collection, Box 1.

*Economics, business, and management.* Interest in books on economics and sociology was limited to specialists in the field. In 1965, the number of acknowledgements for books on economics increased, coming from a variety of economic research institutes in Prague and in Bratislava, as well as from the Central Council of Trade Unions. The following year, the State Planning Commission in Prague acknowledged a book on development planning in Yugoslavia. The Czechoslovak Geographical Society, *Politická ekonomie* (Political economy), a magazine on political economy, and Rapid, a foreign trade company, were the first to acknowledge the Czech translation of Arnold Barach's *The USA and its Economic Future*.<sup>136</sup> Several important economic organizations acknowledged or requested books on technology and social change, consumerism, and planning: the Institute for Technical and Economic Information in Prague; the Central Library of Economic Sciences in Prague; the Central Economics Library in Bratislava; the Research Institute of Economic Planning; and the Czechoslovak State Planning Commission. Several prominent economists and professors also sent letters, including the head of the Department of Economics at Komenský (Comenius) University in Bratislava, the director of the Research Institute of Economic Planning in Prague, and a professor of economics who had recently visited the U.S.<sup>137</sup>

Dr. Ota Šik, director of the Institute of Economics of the Academy of Sciences in Prague and a leader in the economic reform being introduced in Czechoslovakia, thanked for the book *Industrial Production Measurement in the U.S. Concepts, Uses and Compilation Practices* by Clayton Gehman and Cornelia Motheral. The School of Mining in Ostrava thanked for Francois Perroux's *Economie du XXème siècle* and offered to enter into a book exchange with the sponsor.<sup>138</sup> Responses also came from the Department of Political Economy at the J. E. Purkyne University in Brno, the School of Economics in Prague, the Prague economic newspaper *Hospodárske noviny* (Economic news), and from an economic high school in České Budejovice. Until then, there had been little correspondence from schools at the high school

<sup>136</sup> April [1966] Highlights, dated May 11, 1966, 8.

<sup>137</sup> October [1965] Highlights, dated November 8, 1965, 7.

<sup>138</sup> November [1965] Highlights, dated December 6, 1965, 6.

level.<sup>139</sup> A Prague economist, who had just finished his new book on the limits of economic planning, wrote that he “used in it many of the ideas from the books you have kindly sent to me. Some ideas I have used as well in my new textbook on economic planning.”<sup>140</sup> Interesting responses included several promises to review the books received. The Office of Statistics in Prague wrote that *Theory of Economics* by W. A. Lewis would be reviewed in its review *Demografia*, and the editor-in-chief of *Sociologický časopis* thanked for *Language of Social Research* by Lazarsfeld-Rosenberg and said a review would be published in one of the journal’s upcoming issues.<sup>141</sup>

The Research Institute of Economic Planning in Prague asked for three books on the American economy, and continued: “We have tried to borrow them through the International Lending Library Service in Czechoslovakia but have unfortunately not been successful. We are approaching you now in the hope that you might be able to help us. As we are unable to pay for the books, we wonder whether you might not want to exchange them for literature or magazines available in this country [...] Our research workers are very interested in the latest publications on postwar economic development in the U.S. and on economic topics in general.”<sup>142</sup> A professor at Komenský University in Bratislava wrote: “Perhaps you know about the lack of new English books in economics we have. This represents a very serious obstacle in our research activities.”<sup>143</sup> A professor of economics at the same university wrote to the American Economic Foundation, a PSPD sponsor, about his interest in the functioning and development of the American economy and inquired about the possibility of getting a scholarship for an associated professor [like himself].<sup>144</sup>

By December 1965, 96 requests were received following the mailing of 200 IAC gift book order forms offering books on management. During the following two months, PSPD decided to send out another 100 offers to managers and enterprises that were being reorga-

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 8–9.

<sup>140</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1967, dated March 17, 1967, 8.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1967, dated July 18, 1967, 9.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>144</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1967, dated January 18, 1968, 11.

nized according to the “new management system” in Czechoslovakia. Requesters included, among others, an official from the Ministry of General Engineering; a manager of the Čedok Tourist Agency; a factory manager in Ostrava; the Research and Development Institute of the Woodworking Industry; the Central Cooperative Council; the Central Association of Consumers’ Cooperatives and Technical Plans Industry in Prague; the General Director of the Czechoslovak Sugar Industry in Prague; the Ostrava Branch of the Czechoslovak Society of Technology and Science; the poultry industry in Bratislava; leather ware factories in Hradec Králové and starch factories in Havlíčkův Brod; paper mills in Štetin; the National Rubber Enterprise in Kralupy nad Vltavou; the general manager of the Woodworking Industries in Žilina; the District Association for Consumer Cooperation in Ostrava; the biscuit industry in Prague; the Central Research Institute of the Food Industry in Bratislava; the Technical Director of the Vítkovice Steel Works in Ostrava; the Czechoslovak Commercial Bank; and various institutes (in industrial fibers, machinery for consumer goods, textile machinery, tobacco industry, metal foreign trade, agricultural machinery, iron ore), as well as a wine enterprise manager in Bratislava to whom the offer was not sent.<sup>145</sup>

The Institute of Management in Prague was very interested in getting books on economics from the West. It wrote to two sponsors, the American Economic Foundation in New York and the World Affairs Council of Philadelphia, offering to enter into an exchange of books. “To say it frankly,” they wrote, “the publications we received from you till now belong to the most asked books we have in our library. It is because they are just what we need for our work.” An article in the January 28, 1968 issue of *The New York Times* described the Institute of Management as the first of its kind in Eastern Europe. It offered an eleven-month course to 50 selected middle-level managers, using American techniques in its courses.<sup>146</sup> A student at the Prague School of Economics asked for works about the British or U.S.

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<sup>145</sup> September [1965] Highlights, dated October 8, 1965, 5; November [1965] Highlights, dated December 21, 1965, 5; December [1965] Highlights, dated January 13, 1966, 7.

<sup>146</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1968, dated March 14, 1968, 11.

economies, because "I can buy here of course essays of economists from socialist countries but nearly none of western scientists."<sup>147</sup>

The Pavel Eisler Memorial Library at the School of Economics in Prague acknowledged with thanks *L'entreprise et le pouvoir économique* by Alain Bienaymé, and commented in French: "As this library specializes in the world economy, this book is of great value to us. We have very few books by French authors and thus we appreciate your mailing."<sup>148</sup> The Institute of Foreign Trade in Bratislava requested books for use in its training programs and explained: "The greatest difficulty for us is the lack of original book material for our students and teachers."<sup>149</sup>

*Politics and international affairs.* The head of the Foreign Relations Department of the Czechoslovak Radio in Prague received *American Foreign Policy: A Documentary History* by T. Wanamaker. Of the 20 copies of *Studies in British Government* by N. H. Brasher, 14 were acknowledged.<sup>150</sup> The Central Library of Economics in Bratislava requested a number of books on the federalist movement in Western Europe. The Institute of the History of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia acknowledged C. E. M. Joad's *Guide to Philosophy* and wrote that it would like to receive other books, "especially on international politics."<sup>151</sup> The head of the Foreign Relations Department of the Czechoslovak Radio in Prague thanked for Nelson Polsby's *Congress and the Presidency*, which he found "very interesting indeed," and requested *Modern Political Analysis* by Robert Dahl.<sup>152</sup>

Acknowledgements and requests for highly political books came from the Institute of the History of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in Prague, the Institute of the History of the Slovak Communist Party in Bratislava (for Zbigniew Brzezinski's *Alternative zur Teilung* [Alternative to partition] and Alexander Balinsky's *Planning*

<sup>147</sup> Highlights Report October 1969, dated November 7, 1969, 9.

<sup>148</sup> Highlights Report for January–February 1970, dated March 10, 1970, 9.

<sup>149</sup> Bi-monthly Report March–April 1971, 12, George C. Minden undated IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, 1 January 1971 to June 30, 1971, 5. HIA, Minden Collection, Box 1.

<sup>150</sup> December [1965] Highlights, dated January 13, 1966, 8.

<sup>151</sup> February [1966] Highlights, dated March 9, 1966, 8.

<sup>152</sup> September [1965] Highlights, dated October 8, 1965, 6.

*and the Market in the USSR*), the Communist Party's School of Political Science in Prague, and the Institute of the History of European Socialist Countries in Prague (also for Balinsky's book).<sup>153</sup> The Central Library of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences wrote: "Research workers of our Academy would be very much interested in the following items [...]," and went on to list seven books including *Comparative Politics* by Dankwart Rustow and *International Relations* by Karl Deutsch.<sup>154</sup> *Pravda*, the organ of the Slovak Communist Party in Bratislava, acknowledged Bzrezinski's *Alternative zur Teilung* and wrote they would be glad to receive other books.<sup>155</sup>

Notwithstanding the presence of the Warsaw Pact invaders, several post-occupation mailings elicited a satisfactory response. In the best cases, as many as two-thirds of the books sent were acknowledged. Among them were works by Churchill and Heidegger. *The Idea of Nationalism* by Hans Kohn fared well, with 30 copies sent and 19 acknowledged, and so did *The Elite in the Welfare State* by Lesego Thoane, with 20 copies sent and 13 acknowledged.<sup>156</sup> A Prague student who received *Tocqueville and American Civilization* by Max Lerner wrote: "I am glad that the book you have sent me concerns the subject I study—i.e. political science. It is very difficult to get a good book concerning political science here. What I miss is a survey of development of political theory." He then asked for *The Development of Political Theory* by Charles Vereker.<sup>157</sup>

*Institutions*. Whereas in 1961, the large bulk of Czech responses came through exchange programs with a few central libraries and institutes, in November 1963, these exchanges accounted for only 22% of the total responses, yet they continued to function successfully.

The head of the documentation section and library of the Institute of International Politics and Economics in Prague sent a long and grateful letter to Esperienze Internazionali in Rome acknowledging books and suggesting continued exchanges.<sup>158</sup> This shows that even

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<sup>153</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1968, dated March 14, 1968, 8.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>156</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1968, dated November 11, 1968, 9.

<sup>157</sup> January–February [1970] Highlights, dated March 10, 1970, 9.

<sup>158</sup> April [1964] Highlights, dated May 5, 1964, 4.



top scientific institutes had difficulty in purchasing foreign books. The President of the Czechoslovak Sociological Society asked for a number of books on automation and industry, and wrote: "It is impossible for us to pay for this order in foreign currency. However, I shall recommend to various agencies and institutes that they purchase some titles. Apart from this, I would like to inquire about the possibility of obtaining certain sample copies free of charge for review in our scientific magazines."<sup>159</sup> The State Planning Commission in Prague asked for *World Production and Population* by E. S. Voytinsky and the Research Institute for Commerce in Prague for *The New Europe and its Economic Future*, a Twentieth Century Fund study.<sup>160</sup>

*Controversial books.* In 1965, the number of acknowledgements from institutions for controversial books increased. A magazine and a library acknowledged the receipt of *Ostblock, EWG und Entwicklungsländer* (Eastern bloc, EEC, and developing countries), two libraries and a historical institute acknowledged the receipt of *Rise of Social Democracy in Russia*, and five other institutes acknowledged *Introduction to Social Sciences*. A correspondent who asked for Trotsky's *Russian Revolution* and other books wrote: "I do not know if I will get these books because they are rather 'courageous.' I hope you understand me."<sup>161</sup>

Some individuals felt increasingly freer in asking for political titles, such as the Prague student who thanked for *China and the Bomb* by Morton Halperin and *The Control of the Arms Race* by Hedley Bull, and requested Arthur Schlesinger's *A Thousand Days*, or the engineer who asked for books on the aims of the war in Vietnam.<sup>162</sup> A writer asked for *Lonely Years, 1925–1939* by Isaac Babel, saying: "It contains stories and texts never before published even in Russia." Babel was a Russian writer executed during the Stalin era, and it was only recently that some of his works had been partially republished in the communist countries. A professor in Trnava asked for Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago* and added: "But I do not know if the book can come in."<sup>163</sup>

<sup>159</sup> March [1965] Highlights, dated April 5, 1965, 6.

<sup>160</sup> December [1965] Highlights, dated January 13, 1966, 5.

<sup>161</sup> February [1966] Highlights, dated March 9, 1966, 8.

<sup>162</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1967, dated May 10, 1967, 8.

<sup>163</sup> October [1965] Highlights, dated November 8, 1965, 9.



Many requests came from ordinary people who, despite the deterioration of conditions in 1969, continued to ask for many controversial titles by authors such as Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, John F. Kennedy, Isaac Deutscher, John K. Galbraith, Bertrand Russell, Sir Winston Churchill, and Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber.<sup>164</sup>

*Émigré publications.* Interest in exile publications became increasingly outspoken in 1964, with the Czech Postal Service requesting a subscription to the exile paper *Svědectví. Proměny*, published in New York by the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences in America (SVU), contained a signed poem mailed from Czechoslovakia by a poet who had received the journal's first issue.<sup>165</sup>

The Czech Language Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences made the first offer of exchange to an exile organization. In a letter to the secretary general of SVU, it asked for American scientific literature on an exchange basis.<sup>166</sup> The SVU had caught the interest of the institute, as also shown by another letter: "I confess I had no idea how widespread was the activity of the SVU and how meaningfully active were our scientists and artists in the USA. Unfortunately, I am not the only one here who is ignorant about such matters—our Press does not mention the SVU, at least I have not read anything [...] Therefore on the basis of the material I have received, I now intend to publish at least a short report on the SVU in the Prague *Literární noviny* or in *Kulturní tvorba*. I very much appreciate your promise to assist me in arranging an exchange of scientific literature and information [...] So far, it is not possible to purchase scientific literature, and as far as such literature is accessible in libraries, then only with considerable delay."<sup>167</sup>

<sup>164</sup> Highlights Report November 1969, dated December 5, 1969, 9.

<sup>165</sup> March [194] Highlights, dated April 8, 1964, 3, and April [1964] Highlights, dated May 5, 1964, 2.

<sup>166</sup> July [1964] Highlights, dated August 10, 1964, 3.

<sup>167</sup> December [1964] Highlights, dated January 11, 1965, 7. SVU planned to establish an office in New York, and PSPD subsequently expanded its cooperation with it.

Two sponsors reported interest in exile publications on the part of Czechoslovak agencies. PNS Dovož Tisku, the Agency that imported foreign periodicals, ordered a double subscription to *Svědectví*. The Polonia Book Fund received a request from Dr. Jaroslav Valenta, a Polish language expert at the Czech Academy of Sciences, asking that a number of émigré publications be made available to the Institute of Socialist Countries in Prague. He asked among others for *Polemiki*, a Polish exile quarterly published in London.<sup>168</sup>

In previous years, it would have been futile to use an exile organization as a mailing sponsor. In February 1967, PSPD experimented with using SVU as a sponsor, and mailed 100 copies of Egon Hostovský's novel *Tři noci* (*Three Nights*) to Czechoslovakia through the Society, with an offer of other SVU publications. In June 1967, the first ten acknowledgements were received, which was considered a real break-through. The respondents asked for titles taken from the list of the Society's publications, including *The Czechoslovak Contribution to World Culture. Ten Years of the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences* edited by Miloslav Rechcigel (a collection of papers presented at the first Congress of the Society), René Wellek's *Essays on Czech Literature*, and the monthly *Proměny*. A Prague correspondent wrote: "Your mission and goal among nations, even faraway ones such as Czechoslovakia, is an honorable one." He asked that the Society's publications be sent to a friend, whose address he had enclosed.<sup>169</sup>

The library in Martin, Slovakia, complained to the editor of *Proměny* that they had not received any of the 1965 issues. They wrote that they were sending *Kultúrny život*, a Slovak literary weekly, in exchange.<sup>170</sup> A man in Vrané nad Vltavou, a provincial town in Bohemia, wrote to a sponsor in London: "I would like to get the book by our best writer, now émigré, Ladislav Mňačko, *The Taste of Power*. This book has not ever been issued in our country, only few sentences allowed."<sup>171</sup> Even after the Warsaw Pact invasion in 1968, acknowledgements were received for 13 of the 20 copies of *XI všesokolský slet*,

<sup>168</sup> September [1965] Highlights, dated October 8, 1965, 6.

<sup>169</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1967, dated July 18, 1967, 7–8. René Wellek (1903–1995) was a Czech-American contemporary literary critic.

<sup>170</sup> February [1966] Highlights, dated March 9, 1966, 9.

<sup>171</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1968, dated March 14, 1968, 11.

a volume on the 1948 Sokol Festival in Prague sent by the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences in the U.S.

The Polish émigré publisher Kultura in Paris kept in contact with people in Czechoslovakia, particularly with the Polish minority in Silesia. Despite the events of 1968, it received manuscripts for publication from the country.<sup>172</sup> Tatran, a Bratislava publishing house, asked the Librairie Polonaise for a copy of Witold Gombrowicz's *Dzienniki* (*Diaries*), so that it could annotate a Slovak translation of Gombrowicz's novel *Pornografia* it was publishing.<sup>173</sup> The Czechoslovak Store in New York, which began operating as a PSPD sponsor, received confirmation of receipt from Matica Slovenska, a Slovak cultural organization, for copies of *Svědectví*, *The Central European Federalist*, *East Europe*, *Problems of Communism*, and Andrei Sakharov's *Coexistence and Intellectual Freedom*.<sup>174</sup> A Bratislava journalist asked the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences for permission to quote from the Society's *Directory* for a book about Czech and Slovak émigrés he was working on. "It is to be the first complex review of our entire community in exile [...] I want to write objectively and factually: it is time our public was informed about our countrymen scattered around the world. They are many and some have achieved brilliant successes."<sup>175</sup>

In June 1969, the Museum of National Literature in Prague planned to hold an exhibition of émigré books and to submit works for display and publications, and invited Czech and Slovak writers abroad. After Gustav Husák's accession to the Communist Party leadership on April 17, 1969, these plans had to be cancelled. The organizer wrote to the Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences, which had cooperated on the planned exhibit: "You will surely understand that it has been impossible to hold the exhibition as we had hoped [by] April 16."<sup>176</sup> In the end, the museum hosted a smaller exhibition, which opened in May under the title "Návraty" ("Returns"), and lasted through June, with

<sup>172</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1968, dated November 11, 1968, 11.

<sup>173</sup> Highlights Report November 1969, dated December 5, 1969, 9.

<sup>174</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1969, dated July 11, 1969, 11.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

an emphasis on the works of Egon Rostovsky and Jan Cap. Many of the books on display had been used in PSPD's distribution program.<sup>177</sup>

Dr. Jozef Jablonický of the Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences wrote about his difficulties in collecting data for his recently published book *Z ilegality do povstania* (From illegality to uprising), about the Slovak National Uprising of 1944. He had approached dozens of participants, also those living outside of Czechoslovakia, and could count on one hand those exile resistance fighters who answered his letters. "They were suspicious, I suppose, not of myself but because of general political considerations." He asked for back issues of *Naše snahy*, clippings from the exile press about the death of Dr. Jozef Lettrich, the Slovak political leader, and a copy of *Tak sme sa spoznali* (That's how to become acquainted) by Dr. Jozef Pauco, all to be sent in care of a colleague in Vienna.<sup>178</sup>

*Letters of special interest.* Because of their criticism of the government, two letters deserve to be mentioned. A woman in Prague acknowledged a book on Russian art, and wrote: "I would like to compare my knowledge with the actual art in Russia after studying this book. But in spite of Russia being our 'brother,' I cannot travel to Russia individually. The only way to do it is through a red-taped travel bureau."<sup>179</sup> A Prague professor, who had received Anthony Crossland's *The Future of Socialism*, wrote: "I have already found the opportunity to read the Crossland book so far as to realize it to be a very intelligent illustration of the world social movement from the British viewpoint, so that it appears to be just of great use for the 'East countries,' overeducated in [...] orthodox Marx-Leninism."<sup>180</sup>

A spontaneous letter came from a radio broadcaster in Northern Bohemia, who had noticed an English dictionary sent to one of his friends, and asked for a dictionary of his own. "I would be happy to be a member of your book fellowship organization. I work as a speaker of poems, news, and music programs in the Czechoslovak radio in Ustí nad Labem. If you want, I can speak about your fellowship

<sup>177</sup> Highlights Report July–August 1969, dated September 16, 1969, 9.

<sup>178</sup> Highlights Report December 1969, dated January 7, 1970, 10.

<sup>179</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1967, dated March 17, 1967, 8.

<sup>180</sup> December [1965] Highlights, dated January 13, 1966, 8.

organization in [a] special radio program.”<sup>181</sup> Orbis, an official publishing house, sent a request directly to the Free Europe Committee for a subscription to its Czech-language news bulletin and for issues dating back to January 1, 1963.<sup>182</sup> A man who had been asked to translate a letter and gift list wrote to IAC that only a small percentage of the names it was getting from telephone books spoke English, and hinted that he knew many others who would be interested in Western books.<sup>183</sup> The Academy of Sciences requested the *Directory of Party and Government Officials of Communist China* published by the U.S. government.<sup>184</sup>

Ivan Sviták, the young Czech philosopher who was expelled in 1964 from the Institute of Philosophy in Prague because of his revisionist thinking, wrote an open letter in the Viennese *Forum*, asking permission to leave Czechoslovakia. He explained that he had been prevented from publishing or working, and had been accused of parasitism. Sviták received several books through PSPD in 1964.<sup>185</sup> A Prague architect who received a book on new Italian architecture wrote: “I am inclined to personify the board of your organization as a very kindly uncle, not exactly old and not young—grey hair and very smiling eyes, who is never against buying ice cream to the greedy niece. An English uncle, of course. But just where could I get an English uncle, with both my father’s and my mother’s families purely Czech? And my husband’s [...] relatives, close and distant ones, only Czech, too! I am sure this idea must sound funny to you, but it is only like this that I can comprehend that you are sending me the fine books.”<sup>186</sup>

A physician thanked a German publishing house, a PSPD sponsor, for arranging to publish one of his papers, which eventually paid enough royalties to finance a trip to West Germany.<sup>187</sup> A Prague cor-

<sup>181</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1967, dated January 18, 1968, 10.

<sup>182</sup> July [1963] Highlights, dated August 7, 1963, 2.

<sup>183</sup> September [1963] Highlights, dated October 4, 1963, 3.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> October [1965] Highlights, dated November 8, 1965, 9. Ivan Sviták (1925–1994), a Czech philosopher and critic, and an advocate of democratic socialism, lived in the U.S. from 1970 to 1990.

<sup>186</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1968, dated January 15, 1969, 9.

<sup>187</sup> April [1964] Highlights, dated May 5, 1964, 2.

respondent wrote to a sponsor in London about his interest in England and his futile hopes to visit London: "It's possible that you will laugh about my dreams, but in your country there are also fantasists who dream [about] going to the moon [...] I only dream to see Westminster Abbey with my own eyes."<sup>188</sup>

Some letters showed that people were getting bolder and less afraid to speak freely without the fear of censorship. A 19-year old who returned a gift book order form wrote on it: "Long live freedom!"<sup>189</sup> A professor wrote: "Should you travel to Czechoslovakia, I should be most happy to act as your guide and to be your modest host, which I mean."<sup>190</sup> This seemed to substantiate the information received in the U.S. that people were less afraid to meet foreigners than in the past. A Prague correspondent wrote: "I would never have used such a way to obtain books, but first, I have twice lost all I had, books included. In [a] German concentration camp, and now I was years serving a political sentence with my wife. Second, there is nothing to get in this country even if I had means enough to buy it."<sup>191</sup> A thank-you letter for Churchill's *History of the English-Speaking People* read: "In our country, after the communist revolution of 1948, his books are not published and it is a pity for us especially for my generation which was born at the end of the Second World War. But I hope that now it will be better." He then asked for Orwell's *1984*.<sup>192</sup>

A professor at Palacký University in Olomouc wrote that his book on the "non-legendary Socrates" had been "published after 17 years of enforced silence," and translated into English after the Collegium of Philosophy of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences had given its agreement. He added: "Notwithstanding, the Directory of the Publishing House of the Academy refuses obstinately to print the English translation [...] It insists on a co-editor [...] if [the author] wishes his book to appear at all." The professor asked the sponsor's help in getting the English translation published.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> December [1964] Highlights, dated January 11, 1965, 6.

<sup>189</sup> September [1965] Highlights, dated October 8, 1965, 6.

<sup>190</sup> December [1964] Highlights, dated January 11, 1965, 6.

<sup>191</sup> February [1966] Highlights, dated March 9, 1966, 9.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1967, dated March 17, 8.

In early 1967, letters became increasingly outspoken in their criticism of the Czechoslovak regime and in their references to 1948, the year of the communist take-over. A graduate student in Prague wrote: "As you know, difficulties with the exchange of students have had their origin in Czechoslovakia's political trend after 1948. Much work remains to be done in the field of re-binding contacts. I mean contacts at the level of universities and also in other branches of social and economic life [...] From our side there are no personal intellectual contacts, no governmental impulses and, last but not least, [a] weak economic situation caused by imperfect development of our economy after the year 1948. This situation must be ended by unavoidable complete restoration of price mechanism/new economic system which will have a consequence in stabilization [and] then in further development of the economy."<sup>194</sup> A correspondent in Brno asked for a book for a series of articles he was writing on surrealist and Dadaist poetry, and wrote: "These publications are not available here—thanks to our policies since 1948."<sup>195</sup> An anesthesiologist from a provincial town in Bohemia was even more outspoken: "We are witnessing daily an astonishing poverty of logical thinking in those who ought to be responsible leaders of our scientific community. These bosses, as you call them in the USA, are throttling the progress of sciences and ideas because they regard themselves and are regarded by others as infallible."<sup>196</sup>

Other correspondents also mentioned their difficulties with the regime. A geography professor in Prague, who had received a dictionary of geography and *North American Landscapes* by F. J. Monkhouse, wrote: "I thank you also for these books because in the year 1948 I was expelled from the University and my Geographical Institute by two of my [communist party] colleagues and now I am living in a very bad position." Another Prague correspondent wrote: "From 1950 to 1960 I had been imprisoned for political reasons. It is natural in this country that I have lost all, speaking materially, including my books. Now you can understand why I am so grateful for all you have done for me."<sup>197</sup> A retired machinist who built a locomotive

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<sup>194</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1967, dated May 10, 1967, 6.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.



tive model as a hobby asked if a sponsor could help him sell the model to a museum in the U.S., and enclosed photographs of himself with the model. In his letter, he explained his disillusionment with life in Czechoslovakia: "I, too, once believed that hard work is the basis of everything in life [...] But when after forty years of hard work I finally straightened my aching back, what did I see? I saw that my friends became turncoats and thus helped themselves socially and economically in life, while I only gained a bent and aching back."<sup>198</sup>

A number of writers and translators promised translations or reviews of the books in literary magazines. One asked for a "Polish book by Abram Terc [sic]." Other requests came for French surrealist poetry and books on Proust and Paris. A writer who received Gustav Janouch's *Franz Kafka und seine Welt* (Franz Kafka and his world) wrote: "Janouch's book brings new, worthwhile information on Franz Kafka, whose work the Czech progressive intellectuals value highly. It has great interest for our young generation of writers who see in Kafka a model for themselves because of his sincerity, truthfulness, and originality."<sup>199</sup> Zofia Romanowicz, the wife of the owner of the Galerie Lambert in Paris, received a moving letter from a Czech woman who had been a fellow prisoner in a German concentration camp. She thanked for the books she received, and wrote: "Books from you are permanently in use. Actually, they are a kind of round-trip library of art and they brought joy to many people already." Referring to their shared suffering, she wrote: "I can see that whoever was in a German concentration camp will never forget [...] But at least we survived [...] On Good Friday every year we have been burning small candles in memory of those who did not survive. Please burn a candle too."<sup>200</sup>

A student wrote to IBF in London asking for an invitation to visit England, as he would not be allowed to go abroad without it. "This invitation would not oblige you to anything. It would be the formal fashion only."<sup>201</sup> A teacher in Prague wrote that "a few thousand copies" of C. E. Eckersley's *Essential English* had been received in Prague from the Bulgarian Information Centre [sic], but that the

<sup>198</sup> April [1965] Highlights, dated May 4, 1965, 7.

<sup>199</sup> November [1965] Highlights, dated December 21, 1965, 7.

<sup>200</sup> April [1965] Highlights, dated May 4, 1965, 6.

<sup>201</sup> December [1965] Highlights, dated January 13, 1966, 9.



teacher's manual was not available. "We do not know how or why the Bulgarian Information Centre should be distributing copies of Eckersley's book. It might well be that the Bulgarian authorities use these books sent from abroad as hard currency in the COMECON economy."<sup>202</sup>

Igor Hájek, a young Czech writer and former member of the editorial board of *Literární noviny*, sent three letters to various PSPD sponsors stating: "Would you kindly note that any future shipments of books should not be sent to me at *Literární noviny* but to my home address given below, as I have now—together with the entire editorial staff—left this weekly."<sup>203</sup> Two other letters received from former staff members of the weekly made the same point. A Mrs. Faktorová wrote to a German publisher: "You probably know that since the end of September the former editors of *Literární noviny* do not work in the editorial office any more." In a letter to a London sponsor, Bohuslav Blažek wrote: "You have probably heard about the destiny of *Literární noviny*, weekly newspaper of Czechoslovak writers [...] Please be so kind and send me all correspondence on address [...]" giving his home address. The writers seemed eager to keep the Western world aware of the magazine's situation.<sup>204</sup>

In order to confuse the censors, a Prague correspondent wrote a letter written in Latin dated March 29, 1967, to a sponsor in London, about whom he had learned from a friend. He asked for Rudolf Carnap's *Meaning and Necessity*, David Ross's *Aristotle*, and J. H. Woodger's *The Technique of Theory Construction*, and concluded: "The goal pursued by your society and which can greatly contribute to the dissemination of ideas, seems to be very noble. Thanks and greetings." Under his signature he added: "Miserere nobis."<sup>205</sup> A letter sent to Radio Free Europe in New York showed the interest in Western and especially émigré periodicals. It said: "I read in the papers that a specialized foreign press enterprise was opened in Jungmann Street [in

<sup>202</sup> Highlights Report July–August 1967, dated September 10, 1967, 6.

<sup>203</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1967, dated November 10, 1967, 8.

<sup>204</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1967, dated January 18, 1968, 10.

<sup>205</sup> The President [FEC] to the Executive Committee, November 9, 1967. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Archives, Microfiche Temporary Box 3.

Prague] and I am curious to see what will happen. There was once a similar enterprise in Spalena Street. I went there but found only fashion magazines (*Brigitta*) or interior decoration magazines of the *Hobby* type. There was no *Playboy*, *Life*, or similar magazines, not even *Paris et Hollywood* [sic], not to speak of *Česke slovo* [an émigré publication]. Well, perhaps in Jungmann Street they will have other things besides *L'Unità*, *L'Humanité*, *Vie Nuove*, *Noi Donne* [...]. It would be fun if they would also sell *Svědectví*.”<sup>206</sup>

The new mood of the population following the replacement of Party leader Antonín Novotný by Alexander Dubček was evident in a very candid letter by a Czech intellectual dated February 29, 1968, and sent to the U.S. After confirming the receipt of two books about the U.S., he wrote:

[...] I don't now what to do first: read newspapers, watch the TV, or listen to the radio. Panel discussions, interviews, and reports are so interesting that we can't have enough of them. You probably cannot imagine what this means to us. We are now living in a new world. To hear, after so many years, an open criticism and candid words [...] I also hope that even you will come here to see us. I really believe that we are entering a phase of 'enlightened socialism' to use [Eduard] Goldstücker's words. In any case, we breathe better nowadays, people are shedding their passivity and indifference from which they could be provoked so far only by a soccer match, they started to think and search new perspectives [...] There are many excellent people in our country, with good education, cultured, with hidden potentials, who could—if given [the] opportunity—put the nation back on its feet. If only they would be given their chance fast! [...] I envy a little our Helene [daughter, 13 years], her future looks now better than ours did 20 years ago.<sup>207</sup>

<sup>206</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1968, dated March 14, 1968, 10.

<sup>207</sup> From the President [FEC] to the Executive Committee, March 7, 1968. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 31. Eduard Goldstücker (1913–2000), a professor of German literature, was a protagonist of the 1968 Prague Spring as chairman of the Writers' Union and a member of the Czech Parliament. He left for England after the August 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia.

A doctor in the provincial town of Ustí nad Labem thanked for a book on the United States, and described the difficulties that people living in small towns were having in obtaining books. He wrote: "Through the medical journals I am usually well informed about new medical books, but a reader outside Prague with its library facilities cannot know what new books were published in the humanistic subjects in the USA [...] There are at least 20 books at the English department of the University Library in Prague which I am anxious to read. But they don't lend books to readers outside Prague and I can go only rarely to the capital for studying books and journals. In sending books without charge you will do well to give people living outside Prague a high priority."<sup>208</sup>

A correspondent in Bratislava wrote to IBF in London asking for detective novels. He wrote that the Slovak publishing house Smena had asked him "to work out for them a publishing plan for 1969 for their edition 'Labyrinth' comprising some 10–15 detective novels. [...] The publishing of detective novels represents a kind of novelty in this country because it was discontinued for over 15 years."<sup>209</sup> A young man in active military service wrote: "I became a soldier and I am in such a top secret crew I must smuggle out my letters to the foreign countries (it's the same for East and West) from the barracks, but even [though] I am in the Army, I use every day the English language. Yes, I use mostly the military terms and radio operator's phrases." He asked for a dictionary of military terms, Leonard Cottrell's *The Anvil of Civilization*, and books on jazz and the Beatles.<sup>210</sup>

*National Geographic* was popular, and many spontaneous requests for copies or for subscriptions were received. During 1968, PSPD entered 75 subscriptions to the magazine for Czechoslovak readers. The popular magazine *Věda a technika mládeži* (Science and technology for young people), No. 7, 1968, published the first installment of a Czech translation of the article "Czechoslovakia, the Dream and the Reality," by E. J. Linehan, which had appeared in the February 1968

<sup>208</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1968, dated March 14, 1968, 11. PSPD was trying to do precisely that by expanding its mailing lists of addresses in the small towns and villages as well as the major cities of Czechoslovakia.

<sup>209</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1968, dated March 14, 1968, 10.

<sup>210</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1968, dated July 11, 1968, 12.

issue of *National Geographic*. The article resonated with many people in Czechoslovakia.<sup>211</sup> In a lengthy letter, the Svetelektro (SNTL) electronics enterprise in Prague explained that although its allocation of foreign exchange had been increased in 1969, it received only 15% of its allocation in July and the remaining 85% at the end of the year, so that it had to spread payments of outstanding bills throughout the year. The amount due to Holt, Rinehart & Wilson, a PSPD sponsor, payment of which SNTL asked to defer, was exactly \$3.97.<sup>212</sup>

A lady in Prague wrote to IBF in London: "Be certain any form of connection with the Western civilization to be highly valued especially by younger people in this country. Books kind-heartedly sent here are still arriving safely in good order so far as I may know from people who know about the existence of your Book Fellowship." She added that IBF "may have good presumptions" as to why some acknowledgements of receipt "can be sent off only with considerable interval of time between."<sup>213</sup> A Polish lady in Warsaw wrote to London and gave the names and addresses of two friends in Bratislava "who would [...] quite especially appreciate your help. I say 'quite especially' because as far as I know, the shortage of English books is in Bratislava more acute than in Warsaw or Prague."<sup>214</sup>

*Letters received after the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion and references to the political situation in Czechoslovakia.* Several letters were received from Czechoslovaks who had received books in the past and who now lived abroad as a result of the invasion. A noted Prague economist wrote that he had had to leave Prague and was now a professor at the University of Alberta, Canada. A woman who had written a monograph and had taken it with her to Madras, India, wrote: "Publishing it in Czechoslovakia became useless for me for obvious reasons." Letters also arrived from Czechoslovak students in England and in Sweden, most of them asking for dictionaries.<sup>215</sup> Helena Holubová, a Slovak writer who received Gaëtan Picon's *Panorama des idées contemporaines*

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<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>212</sup> Highlights Report September 1969, dated October 6, 1969, 8.

<sup>213</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1969, dated July 11, 1969, 11.

<sup>214</sup> Highlights Report December 1969, dated January 7, 1970, 9.

<sup>215</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1968, dated November 11, 1968, 10.

wrote: "Your books help me very much in my own literary work, enriching my European conscience as a member of a small nation."<sup>216</sup> A student of the sociology of culture and mass communications at Charles University in Prague wrote: "I have a lot of work to make ends meet and furthermore it is almost impossible to buy books from the other side of [the] Iron Curtain here in Czechoslovakia." He then requested seven sociological titles.<sup>217</sup>

*Listy*, the suppressed weekly of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers, confirmed the receipt of *The Present Age in British Literature* by David Daiches. As the weekly had not appeared since May 15, 1969, PSPD had forwarded the book to the library of the Czechoslovak Writers' Union. An addressee in Prague wrote: "Your books are a great help for us [...] in the present time. You will do a lot of work for people here by sending many [copies] of George Orwell's *Animal Farm* as a 'Bible' to the present time."<sup>218</sup> A Prague engineer's letter to a London sponsor said: "The action of the 'International Book Fellowship' supports very effectively the ideals of friendship and understanding among the peoples of the world and is particularly welcome to us in Czechoslovakia in these days which are so ominous for our country. Many thanks to the people of England for the moral support in times of Soviet aggression."<sup>219</sup>

A high school teacher in Nové Zámky, Slovakia, wrote: "I am a great admirer of your country and of the American people and am convinced about [the] superiority of the USA in science, economy, culture, education, etc. above the 'socialist' and other states of the world. As an educated one, I would like to recognize the American cultural, scientific, and political life as much as possible. As I am a professor of mathematics and physics, I would like to deliver my new knowledge to my students."<sup>220</sup> An English teacher in Kynšperk, Western Bohemia, who received *Britain 1967*, wrote: "It is much better when a teacher can use some authentic facts and especially in those

<sup>216</sup> Highlights Report October 1969, dated November 7, 1969, 8. The original letter was written in French.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>218</sup> Highlights Report December 1969, dated January 7, 1970, 9.

<sup>219</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1968, dated January 15, 1969, 9.

<sup>220</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1969, dated May 12, 1969, 10.

fields which change so rapidly as economy and culture [sic] affairs. Besides, our textbooks are not always reliable, being often made from the propaganda point of view.”<sup>221</sup>

References to the political situation eventually became less frequent, but some letters continued to address it. A man in Košice, who asked for the renewal of his subscription to *National Geographic Magazine*, gave his thanks for this “Christian democratical [sic] help during these very gloomy period [sic] of oppressive political atmosphere provided by the brutal neighbor.”<sup>222</sup> In a letter written in May 1969 and sent to New York, a book recipient commented on Gustáv Husák and enclosed separate clippings about the 1968 invasion.<sup>223</sup> Another correspondent wrote: “I am absolutely knocked out by the quality of some foreign papers we cannot get over here. As you perhaps know, we can’t buy the Western press over here at all as we used to a year back.”<sup>224</sup> A letter mailed in West Germany acknowledging books mailed from New York read:

Our nation [the Czechs] has for centuries been brought up on the traditions of Western, Christian ideology and this mentality lives in our subconscious. The essential component of this is individual liberty. Freedom of conscience, opinion, expression [...] So when personal freedom came to life again last year and it was possible to speak, swear, debate freely, the whole nation embraced it with enthusiasm and complete understanding. This, however, did not please the East. It is wrong to think that people favored some sort of return to capitalism; everybody was in favor of socialism, but a reasonable socialism, not a dogmatic one [...] This is the reason why the Russian invasion was such a tremendous letdown. It has resulted in hatred of everything Russian [...] Some three-quarters or more of the population still feels that way. Last year, people worked with enthusiasm; now, the contrary is true. It is hard to say what the future holds, but I am afraid it will not be easy to shake off Russia’s pressure and embrace. We

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<sup>221</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>223</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1969, dated July 11, 1969, 10.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 9.

cannot count on any help from abroad. Everybody realizes that, and this makes things easier for the present rulers.<sup>225</sup>

A student in Josefov nad Metují, Eastern Bohemia, who asked for books on English language and literature, wrote: "You are presupposed to know how the situation in our country looks. It is not favorable for students that want to care about the languages of West Europe (e.g. German, English, Spanish), which is caused mainly by political problems [...] There is a shortage of good textbooks, teachers [...] That's why everyone welcomes whatever possibility of assistance."<sup>226</sup> A correspondent in Košice wrote: "We are not masters of our own life. I can only note for those young men in [the] USA who are not satisfied with conditions in [the] USA [that they should] come here and try to make their fortune somewhere in Eastern Europe. I hardly believe they would be happy."<sup>227</sup> An anonymous Prague correspondent described the public reaction to the anniversary of the self-immolation of the student Jan Pallach, and enclosed a leaflet urging people to protest against the regime silently, by not buying newspapers, stopping work for five minutes at noon, and by laying flowers on Pallach's grave. The author derided the fact that "the hardline political course is being applied everywhere," and ridiculed economic reports that "Czechoslovakia is among the most industrialized countries in the world. Marvelous! You can't get a few screws and there is a shortage of metals, cement, bricks, shoes, bed linen, towels, handkerchiefs, [and] underwear in a country that numbers among them [the industrialized nations]. How simply fantastic—and it's all lies."<sup>228</sup>

A correspondent in Levice, Western Slovakia, a member of the Czech Brethren who received a copy of the Slovak émigré periodical *Naše snahy*, wrote: "Our conditions are very gloomy, above all in the economic field, but precisely for that reason they are not hopeless [...] We are not a free nation, this is our present fate [...] It will be dark but not forever [...] The whole world is in crisis and we are but a tiny

<sup>225</sup> Highlights Report November 1969, dated December 5, 1969, 9–10.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>228</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1970, dated March 10, 1970, 9–10.

spot on the checkerboard of nations.”<sup>229</sup> A professor at the Faculty of Pedagogy of Purkyně University in Brno requested *Le monde chrétien* by André Malraux and *L’an 2000* by Herman Kahn. He commented: “In these times it is somewhat difficult to visit Western Europe and the books you are sending us create a welcome bond between us—that is why I am even more indebted to you.”<sup>230</sup> A student in Prague wrote: “Nowadays I attend an evening school to learn English but in our country there are very bad textbooks now. We always learn about socialism [sic], trade unions, and some unsuccessful ideology. I don’t like these themes and therefore I should be very glad to get any better textbooks.”<sup>231</sup>

A Czech nuclear physicist working at the atomic research center in Dubna, U.S.S.R., wrote: “Your books are helping me to think more about myself and in what way they contribute to my general knowledge. I can better see differences, similarities; I can better understand and that is what I like—you are sending me [...] ‘raw material’ for my thinking. I learn English and also much more. I learn about the way of thinking of your people [...] how they state their problem, how they solve it, what kind of mechanism assures the continuity of your cultural life, what makes your people do what they are doing. You are doing it for me—I am doing nothing for you but you are doing it for many others as well, and we all benefit to the benefit of our world. Let me say a tiny almost negligible change will appear, but what great thing occurs without these tiny, negligible changes?”<sup>232</sup>

A Prague technician who tutored privately in English wrote to a London sponsor about how he took the books he received “time after time among my ‘pupils’ to read and translate from the original English book made in England.” He added: “I don’t know if you are informed about the tough cultural censorship that is spreading up around the

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid., 8. The original letter was written in French.

<sup>231</sup> Bi-monthly Report March–April 1971, 12, George C. Minden undated IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, 1 January to June 30, 1971, 4. HIA George Minden Collection, Box 1.

<sup>232</sup> Bi-monthly Report September–October 1971, 14, George C. Minden undated IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, 1 July to December 31, 1971, 4–5. Ibid.



whole country—the books and films of the Free World and even the translations of books from this part of the world that have been prepared for publishing are stopped [...] The great majority of our nation depends now on good books because the censorship concerns also TV where mostly political talks represent the main ‘show.’”<sup>233</sup> A *National Geographic* subscriber in Košice requested the renewal of his subscription and wrote that the magazine was “the only one which allows me to maintain the spiritual and cultural connection with the Western world.”<sup>234</sup>

The contents of all these letters faithfully describe and reflect the oppressive situation in Czechoslovakia nearly four years after the Soviet invasion of August 1968. But this did not halt the mailing and direct distribution of Western books and periodicals for the entire next decade.

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<sup>233</sup> Bi-monthly Report July–August 1971, 10–11, George C. Minden undated IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, 1 July to December 31, 1971, 4. Ibid.

<sup>234</sup> Bi-monthly Report May–June 1972, 10, George C. Minden undated IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, 1 January to June 30, 1972, 4. Ibid.

## CHAPTER 16

# Letters from Hungary under Goulash Communism

While most responses from Hungary came from individuals, letters from institutions rose to more than 15% of the total at the beginning of 1963, many from organizations that had long received books but had never replied before. Letters from institutions continued to increase steadily in 1965, again with many of them responding for the first time. Letters from Hungary showed a constant and notable enthusiasm for increased cultural exchanges with the West, for works on literature, Western languages, modern art, architecture, music, in particular jazz, religion, philosophy, history, and general culture. Books on politics and the humanities also began to elicit more responses, and requests for books on law and for scientific and technical works also increased. In 1964, the International Advisory Council (IAC) began to receive requests from people in the West who wanted books to be sent to their relatives inside Hungary. By mid-1966, the numbers of letters coming from students amounted to 15% of the total; a sizeable figure considering that for a long time practically no responses had come from this target group. During 1968, the receipt of 15,560 books was acknowledged and 7,704 books were requested. By the end of the year, some 50 spontaneous requests a month arrived, twice as many as at the end of 1967.

*Cultural exchange.* From the start, letters from Hungary stressed the desire for cultural exchange and international cooperation, for a better understanding between Eastern Europe and the Western World, and for maintaining and strengthening cultural ties between Hungary and

the West. Many letters also revealed a hunger for knowledge about the rest of the world.

A doctor, who praised a London publisher for sending books, wrote: "I stress the importance of cultural relations with the country of the Magna Charta, especially after the [experience of] moral undermining, demoralizing totalitarianism, and [the] Second World War."<sup>1</sup> A philosopher wrote: "Apart from the fact that I could never myself buy such a treasure, it is a tremendous feeling to participate in such an altruistic cultural mission."<sup>2</sup> A researcher wrote: "Wishing you the greatest success in your work, because we appreciate this way of human spirit as the best way for understanding a great people for humanism and world peace."<sup>3</sup> A teacher said: "I am convinced that your project of sending books to foreign readers has fully accomplished its aim—to make known and loved the language, literature, and culture of your dear country and to work for peace among the nations."<sup>4</sup> A recipient of an English dictionary wrote: "Every material gives a connection between two countries. I hope [there] will come such a time when we also can contribute to your cultural life." According to a chemist: "This free help given by you to scientists irrespective of the place where they live is also an important brick in building a better world."<sup>5</sup> For a high school teacher, the books he received were "a new approach of exchanging ideas and promoting better understanding among nations and people." A Budapest librarian wrote: "We are very grateful for the gift which intends to strengthen the cultural ties between our two countries."<sup>6</sup>

A teacher, who had received *Paths of American Thought* by Arthur Schlesinger, wrote: "I have considered it as a new approach of exchanging ideas and promoting a better understanding among

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<sup>1</sup> Memorandum to the President [FEC] from George C. Minden, March [1963] Highlights, dated April 8, 1963, 1. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Microfiche Provisional Box 3. All letter quotations up to the January–February 1970 Highlights Report originate from this source.

<sup>2</sup> August [1963] Highlights Report, dated September 6, 1963, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Memorandum from PSPD to the President, Free Europe, Inc., April [1966] Highlights, dated May 11, 1966, 6.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Both quotes from May–June [1967] Highlights, dated July 18, 1967, 5.

<sup>6</sup> Both quotes from February [1965] Highlights, dated March 5, 1965, 3.

nations and people.”<sup>7</sup> An economist wrote: “French-Hungarian culture has [shared] a beautiful past for a long time although in recent times the cultural ties have been somewhat less close. However we remain in love with beautiful books and are trying to reestablish the valuable cultural ties and to expand and enrich European and French culture [in Hungary]. I am convinced that these two beautiful books have been sent to us to help achieve our wishes, and through them we will have renewed strength and help.” A teacher wrote to a Paris sponsor: “Mailing such books will make it possible to strengthen cultural ties and the friendship which has existed for a long time between our two countries.”<sup>8</sup> An engineer who received a book on the British Government said: “It is very thoughtful and I hope that I can help a bit the better understanding and stronger ties between our countries.” An economist wrote: “I want to emphasize that all these goods of the spirit [books] sent by you, do me a great service, of which I shall make use in my public as well as in my private life. I assure you that your cultural mission will be publicized by me in the future to all Hungarian establishments.”<sup>9</sup>

Hungarian correspondents were curious about where and how the sponsors got hold of their names and addresses, and they wanted their appreciation to be passed along. A professor and art historian wrote to IAC asking for books, and voiced his assumption that UNESCO was behind the mailing project.<sup>10</sup> In a personal letter written to the book program’s Hungarian national editor, a well-known scientist and university professor emphasized the shortage of Western books in Hungary and the vital need the book program fulfilled. “I do not know whether you know the American and European organizations through which we receive books. You perhaps do not know what this means to us. [...] It is these books which keep up our faith and courage, because this is the only way for us to keep abreast of the culture in which we were brought up and to which we feel we belong.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> April [1965] Highlights, dated May 4, 1965, 5.

<sup>8</sup> March [1965] Highlights, dated April 5, 1965, 4, and April [1965] Highlights, dated May 4, 1965, 5.

<sup>9</sup> December [1965] Highlights, dated January 13, 1966, 5.

<sup>10</sup> March [1964] Highlights, dated April 8, 1964, 3.

<sup>11</sup> September [1964] Highlights, dated October 15, 1964, 1.

Visitors to the West also gave eloquent testimony to the value of the mailing project. A woman, the granddaughter of a famous dramatist and wife of a well-known novelist in whose salon many of the Hungarian intellectual elite continued to meet, said that American, English, French, and German publishers were regularly mailing books to Hungary, and that these books played a decisive role in the intellectual life of the country. When people met, they talked about the books they had received and the books they could borrow, and read excerpts to each other. "I think," said the visitor, "that those who direct this action do not know themselves how far-reaching an influence it has on Hungarian intellectual life at this time."<sup>12</sup>

The head of the Comparative Linguistics Department of Columbia University, who visited Hungary on behalf of the Ford Foundation, provided other proof of the effectiveness of the program. He reported that Hungarian professors and writers were enthusiastic about the books they received from the West, which, they said, would otherwise be unavailable to them. A similar report came from an American of Hungarian origin who lectured on French literature at New York University, and met many young intellectuals during a trip to Hungary.<sup>13</sup> Students and professionals began asking sponsors to arrange contacts between them and their counterparts in Western Europe and in the U.S. Towards the end of 1963, the tone of the letters became increasingly optimistic, with correspondents praising "Western" and not merely "international" ties. A doctor expressed the hope that relations would soon be normal so he could subscribe to a [Western] review, and a man who saw a German publisher's book exhibit in Budapest hoped to be able to place orders soon. A number of respondents wrote that they soon hoped to visit the West, and requested appropriate titles.<sup>14</sup> A number of writers asked for assistance in getting their books published in the West. As one writer explained: "I have written two novels, but they cannot be published here in Hungary because they are not written in [accordance with] Marxist-Leninist ideology."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> June [1964] Highlights, dated July 17, 1964, 1.

<sup>13</sup> July [1964] Highlights, dated August 10, 1964, 2.

<sup>14</sup> September [1963] Highlights, dated October 15, 1963, 3 and November [1963] Highlights, dated December 6, 1963, 2.

<sup>15</sup> June [1964] Highlights, dated July 17, 1964, 1.

Numerous unsolicited requests came from people who had heard from friends or others that Western books were available free of charge. Many of these letters stressed that Western books were unavailable in Hungary. A teacher of English literature wrote: "To order English books is not so simple in Hungary, since it not only requires a certain sum of currency—of what we are always short of—but also a fairly long time till the books arrive here."<sup>16</sup> A correspondent wrote about an exhibition of Western books in Hungary offering an opportunity to order the books, which were never delivered. "In November 1963," he wrote, "here at the University Bookshop, there was arranged an exhibition of OUP [Oxford University Press] books where it was possible for customers—for the first time in 20 years—though not to buy there and then but to order books for themselves [...] All this came to nothing. Father and I ordered several of your prominent books shown then and have made inquiries several times since at the bookshop—in vain."<sup>17</sup>

Correspondents often indicated that books were shared with others, and read by many people. From a physicist-researcher came the following letter: "We organized two years ago a group with my friends at Debrecen University which wants to have close contact with the intellectual life of the world. The members of this group are wide-ranging, interested in all spheres of cultural life; however, our station in life is not favorable." He asked for one or more copies of the book edited by Gaëtan Picon.<sup>18</sup> Another correspondent wrote: "These books mean the connection with the world around us. When I have new books from abroad, all my friends would like to see [them], and they are given from hand to hand."<sup>19</sup> A letter from Budapest said: "After I had read [John Henry] Newman's *The Idea of a University*, it is [common] for us to give it to our friends. We are very fond of reading books in foreign languages as we are teachers, professors of these languages, but ideas of the whole world are interesting, too."<sup>20</sup> An economic consultant with the Hungarian State Railroads wrote to a New York sponsor: "I should like to ask you now to register and take me in

<sup>16</sup> September [1965] Highlights, dated October 8, 1965, 3.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> October [1965] Highlights, dated November 8, 1965, 5.

your file, because I am eager to get some good books from you. My heart's desire is to become your permanent client."<sup>21</sup>

*Literature and literary history.* There was a great demand among educated Hungarians for works on literary criticism and literary history. When it came to modern English or French novelists, the novels themselves rather than evaluations of them were sought after. Many letters of thanks were received for books on American and English literature and culture, especially modern poetry and drama, because such works "were not available in Hungary and books available in our shops are of no use."<sup>22</sup>

*America and American literature.* There was a considerable and constant interest in, as well as a great eagerness to learn more about, America and Britain, American history and politics, the American way of life, American literature and culture, and American jazz, accompanied by an immense respect for Anglo-Saxon institutions and traditions. Samuel Eliot Morrison's *Oxford History of the American People* and Booth Mooney's *The Lyndon Johnson Story* made a strong impression on many Hungarians. A Budapest university student, who received a book on Lincoln, wrote: "I would like to know more about your country, your people, [through] any American book." And another student wrote: "I should like to know much about anything that is connected with American, English, French, German culture, about life in these countries, about their peoples, etc."<sup>23</sup>

A student attending lectures on the history of pedagogy wrote: "Unfortunately, more time was devoted to ancient times and the middle ages than to the modern age, and not a word was about education at foreign universities. I did hear once or twice about American education but my knowledge, I am afraid, is very scanty."<sup>24</sup> From a chemical engineer who received Merton Babcock's *The American Frontier: A Social and Literary Record*, came the following words: "It presents to us a different colorful aspect [of] the true Wild West, but also the spreading of [...] Western civilization from the Atlantic to the Pacific [...] It is

<sup>21</sup> Highlights Report September 1969, dated October 6, 1969, 14.

<sup>22</sup> March [1966] Highlights, dated April 11, 1966, 4.

<sup>23</sup> Both quotes from February [1965] Highlights, dated March 5, 1965, 3.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 4.

for me especially interesting for this kind of topics are nearly lacking here.”<sup>25</sup> A university student who received James Buchanan’s *The United States and World War II* wrote: “It was very interesting for me because in this way I could know the Second World War from another point of view.”<sup>26</sup> The communist press always tried to give the impression that World War II was won solely by the Soviet Union.

A sociologist commenting on the factual articles in the *Reporter* noted that he could thus obtain an insight into the cultural life of the USA.<sup>27</sup> A professor of English at the University of Budapest called David Nichol’s *States of Power* a “wonderfully written book about the emergence of the great nation [the USA] with a great vocation in the world today.”<sup>28</sup> A Budapest woman who received a book of essays on Henry David Thoreau wrote that she planned to translate *Walden* into Hungarian for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Thoreau’s birth.<sup>29</sup> A recipient of *America in Perspective* by Henry Steele Commager said: “One hears a lot about America, of course, one meets Hungarians living in the US and visiting here. It is not easy to have an unbiased and impartial opinion, and I think this book will be of some help to see the other and perhaps better side of the world through the eyes of some prominent people.”<sup>30</sup> The University Library in Debrecen wrote: “Considering current research going on in the English Dept. of our university, your gift [Babcock’s *The American Frontier*] was very welcome to our specialists in American literature.”<sup>31</sup>

Letters from Hungary sent after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy were full of praise and sympathy. Even a year later, letters of shock and grief about his death continued to arrive. A high school teacher wrote: “This memorial issue of *Life* on the occasion of the most shocking event of our time remains forever my saddest and most startling and staggering reading matter.”<sup>32</sup> A number of letters

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<sup>25</sup> September [1965] Highlights, dated October 8, 1965, 4.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> April [1964] Highlights, dated May 5, 1964, 3.

<sup>28</sup> October [1963] Highlights, dated November 8, 1963, 2.

<sup>29</sup> February [1965] Highlights, dated March 5, 1965, 4.

<sup>30</sup> October [1965] Highlights, dated November 8, 1965, 5.

<sup>31</sup> November [1965] Highlights, dated December 21, 1965, 4.

<sup>32</sup> September [1964] Highlights, dated October 15, 1964, 1.



expressed thanks for the Warren Commission's Report on the assassination of President Kennedy, testifying to the affection in which the President was still held two years after his death. "Most of the people living in the civilized world, in our country, too, will keep a dear memory for the unfortunate president who cannot be made alive, alas."<sup>33</sup> Ted Sorensen's *Kennedy* elicited considerable interest.

A young journalist, who received *This USA* by Ben Wattenberg and Richard Scammon, wrote: "It will certainly satisfy my curiosity about the United States. Some of the headings of the individual chapters might have been questions put by me."<sup>34</sup> Many university students wanted to know more about American life, customs, and people. A 16-year old high school student asking for a book on U.S. history wrote: "We are learning world history and inside of this the history of the United States of America, with her great statesmen like G. Washington and A. Lincoln, and I would like to study this in originally [sic]."<sup>35</sup> Young Hungarians were very interested in American cars ("the best all over the world"), in American achievements in space, and in American astronautics in general.<sup>36</sup> A student who had received a one-year Ford Foundation scholarship to the U.S. wrote: "I would not like to arrive in your country as ignorant of its history and geography as I am now, and I am asking you to help me in my preliminary studies." He asked for "a few books giving an overall picture of your country, its natural beauties, history, and traditions."<sup>37</sup>

Interest in American literature, culture, history, politics, fiction, and plays seemed to increase in 1965. Though the regime was by then publishing American novels, readers suspected that these official versions were incomplete. A Budapest student, who received P. H. Boyton's *America in Contemporary Fiction*, wrote: "I hope that however indirectly, I shall also get a glimpse of what the United States is like—a country I would like to see for myself so much."<sup>38</sup> A teacher who received the same book said: "Thank you very much for your kindness

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<sup>33</sup> October [1965] Highlights, dated November 8, 1965, 5.

<sup>34</sup> April [1966] Highlights, dated May 11, 1966, 5.

<sup>35</sup> January [1965] Highlights, dated February 5, 1965, 5.

<sup>36</sup> March [1966] Highlights, dated April 11, 1966, 4.

<sup>37</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1967, dated July 18, 1967, 5.

<sup>38</sup> April [1965] Highlights, dated May 4, 1965, 4.

in sending me this most brilliant summary of modern American literature [...] It seems interesting for us to compare the summary with the one having appeared on the same purpose in Hungarian. The greatest theatrical event of last year was the presenting of Eugene O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra* and *Long Day's Journey unto Night*, performed by two different leading theatres [...] We are happy to welcome J. Steinbeck in our capital. His works as well as those of Hemingway, Sinclair Lewis, Faulkner, Dreiser, Julian Huxley, George Santayana, and Th. Wolfe are among the most read works. J. D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye* has been the cause of some debates.”<sup>39</sup> A number of letters mentioned translations of American books. A correspondent wrote: “I am just going to translate modern American poems and these books [pamphlets from the University of Minnesota on American writers] will help me better understand [the] American literary situation.” The Hungarian copyright office asked for a copy of *A Planet Called Earth* by George Gamow for possible translation into Hungarian.<sup>40</sup>

There was also widespread interest in American literature on the part of teachers. A high school teacher in Budapest, who had received *American Literature: A Brief History* by Walter Blair and others, wrote: “It will be a valuable help in teaching my more advanced students and give them some idea of American literature. They seem to know a little of Poe, of Mark Twain, of Arthur Miller, and of Hemingway—but that is far from having an inkling of American literature, isn't it.”<sup>41</sup> A professor of comparative literature at Budapest University praised the two-volume *American Literary Masters* for “its inestimable value, with their excellent selection of best American literature and carefully written, philologically exact notes.”<sup>42</sup>

An associate professor of English at the Lajos Kossuth University of Debrecen, who spent a year in the U.S. on a Ford scholarship, wrote: “I am often in bad need for books and cannot obtain them all; or if I am lucky, only after 10–20 months. This is partly owing to currency restrictions in my country, partly to a delay caused by the many channels which my occasional orders of books have to pass. (I cannot order books

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> November [1965] Highlights, dated December 21, 1965, 4.

<sup>41</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1967, dated March 17, 1967, 4.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

directly.) Both difficulties are real and very frustrating. I am working on a book dealing with the development of the literary consciousness of American men of letters, their literary creeds, and it is great[ly] hindered by lack of books [...] My tentative suggestion and request is this: would it not be worthwhile for you to 'adopt me,' so to speak, to the extent of a yearly amount decided by you which I could spend by sending you the titles of books I need [...] About \$50 a year would entirely cover my needs."<sup>43</sup> A teacher of English who received a book on Carl Sandburg wrote: "I must admit that we do not know much about present American literature, though my pupils at school show great interest in it. Some of them have literary ambitions and I would like to train them for translating American literary works into Hungarian and so to stop this gap." She asked for Sandburg's *Harvest Poems*.<sup>44</sup>

A provincial teacher of English who received Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer* wrote: "I am especially glad because we teach Mark Twain at school and my pupils know a part from it but I have not been able to give this charming book of American literature into their hands. I am sure that it will help my pupils to a better understanding of your culture and life."<sup>45</sup> Some of the very successful mailings included Milton Crane's *Fifty Great American Short Stories*, 80 sent, 75 acknowledged, and James Watson's *The Double Helix*, 30 sent, 27 confirmed. A Budapest engineering student who received *The Spirit of Seventy-Six* by Henry S. Commager and R. B. Morris wrote back that it would "give me a good help soon because, being a student, we start next year with the study of American history." A teacher in Sárospatak who received *Man on the Moon* by John M. Mansfield wrote: "I think it will be very useful, not only for me but for my pupils, too." He went on to ask for material about the history of America and everyday life in the U.S.<sup>46</sup> Two Budapest students wrote a joint letter asking for books in English. They noted: "It is not easy to get really good, interesting, amusing, nice, or famous books—written by American or English writers—in our shops. Yes, there are (some available), but not the best and sometimes we get negative answers to our requests."<sup>47</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Highlights Report July–August 1967, dated September 10, 1967, 4.

<sup>44</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1968, dated March 14, 1968, 7.

<sup>45</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1969, dated May 12, 1969, 15.

<sup>46</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1970, dated March 10, 1970, 16.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

Between August 1966 and June 1967, 400 gift book order forms were mailed to Hungary, offering the recipients a choice of five books, of which they would receive three, from a list of 30 German language titles about the U.S. Hungarians showed a similar interest as they had had in the United States, and sent back 187 forms or somewhat under 50% of the number mailed. The most requested titles were *Die Nationalgalerie Washington* by John Walker, *New York, Kalifornien, Florida, Washington, D.C.*, and *Nordamerika in Farben* (North America in colors) by Ivan Sanderson, from the Panorama Books series published by Andermann Verlag in Munich.<sup>48</sup>

*Language, textbooks, dictionaries, and education.* These books, especially the Webster dictionaries and small encyclopedias, were always in great demand. English teachers asked for books on teaching methods and on the English language. A female teacher from Budapest wrote: "In this country we are cut off from any progress in the English spoken world unless we are [...] supplied by printed matters from abroad [...] Interest for this beautiful language is increasing in this part of the world [...] We teachers do want to gain a further polish and perfection in it but our chances are limited indeed. The only possibilities for us are provided by a communist press, translations from Russian. No wonder they are totally uninteresting for us."<sup>49</sup> Another English language teacher wrote that he was writing English textbooks for Hungarian students, "and the book you sent me help[ed] me a very great deal."<sup>50</sup> A lawyer in Pécs said: "I could not buy these books here in a bookshop, and it is the only possibility by [which] I can get [such] books." He asked for other books "which help me in learning English and to know better the life and civilization of the USA."<sup>51</sup>

A Budapest professor, who received *American-English Usage*, wrote: "Reading American literature we foreigners encounter difficulties [...] You have words, especially nouns, verbs, in your everyday usage, that we—during our studies—simply never heard of or solely

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<sup>48</sup> Highlights Report June–July 1967, dated September 10, 1967, 5.

<sup>49</sup> September [1964] Highlights, dated October 15, 1964, 2.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>51</sup> May [1965] Highlights, dated June 8, 1965, 5.

in different meanings. This book filled the gap for foreign students.”<sup>52</sup> Another teacher wrote: “I am exceedingly grateful to you for the printed matter you are so kind to send me. I literally can’t go on with my teaching without this help. Please do not drop me from your list. God may bless you for it.”<sup>53</sup> A provincial high school teacher who received Norman Lewis’s *Dictionary of Modern Pronunciation* wrote: “Please accept my warmest thanks for it as well as that of my pupils who also enjoy this magnificent handbook. Such books can really help us to make our children get acquainted with correct English pronunciation and become firm friends of this culture.”<sup>54</sup> An English teacher, who asked for “any printed matter in the English language,” wrote: “I am teaching more than 200 pupils, restricted to my own resources since the Government does not encourage this type of knowledge.”<sup>55</sup>

While visiting New York, two prominent linguists and professors told the Hungarian national editor: “Foreign language teaching in Hungary is undergoing a revolution and is being promoted in every way.”<sup>56</sup> A sociologist visiting New York said: “Everybody is learning English.” Two other visitors commented that there were not enough English language teachers in Hungary, which helped explain the demand for textbooks. An English teacher trying to instill his own love of English culture into his students cautiously asked for help in establishing contacts with “officials (university, college, library, etc.) or private contacts which could help in my work without involving any relations that may be construed as political.”<sup>57</sup> The head of the Language Department of the Karl Marx University of Budapest was the first to acknowledge the receipt of two Linguaphone records sent to some ten Hungarian universities. He wrote: “I need not tell you what a great service the records will do in our work since our institute’s language laboratory was installed recently.”<sup>58</sup> The headmaster of the Piarist Gymnasium in Budapest wrote: “Any book in con-

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> January [1965] Highlights, dated February 5, 1965, 4.

<sup>54</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1967, dated July 18, 1967, 7.

<sup>55</sup> October [1965] Highlights, dated November 8, 1965, 4.

<sup>56</sup> September [1963] Highlights, dated October 4, 1963, 1.

<sup>57</sup> April [1963] Highlights, dated May 6, 1963, 3.

<sup>58</sup> July [1964] Highlights, dated August 10, 1964, 2.

nection with English language is a great help to us as we have two classes in our school where we teach English, one of them a special English class with seven lessons weekly.”<sup>59</sup> From a textbook editor came the following letter: “I work as an editor of English textbooks at the Publishing House for Textbooks and write textbooks for English classes of the grammar school. I should greatly appreciate your assistance in sending me complimentary copies of English textbooks for children and students. Now we are about to publish our textbooks with the audio-visual approach [...] Your help in this field would be very efficient.”<sup>60</sup> A professor in Budapest wrote: “Language teaching in our University will be reorganized from this academic term on in such a way that a separate institution within the University will deal only with language teaching to adults with a new language laboratory and experimental groups. Thus we badly need all the publications which can be useful to us.”<sup>61</sup>

In February 1966, one-third of the books requested (416 out of 1,359) were about literature or language. An English teacher wrote: “We have no [...] chance to purchase any visual or auditive [sic] aid [...] Every book or magazine is gratefully welcome to us. We are the persons struggling day-to-day to provide the maximum of aid and knowledge to millions of people young and old eagerly studying your language and culture.”<sup>62</sup> A correspondent in Budapest, who received *Linguistics and Style* by N. E. Enkvist and *Modern English* by Neile Osman, wrote: “Since I am actively engaged also professionally as a translator, these books will be of great assistance in my work.” Another correspondent who received Michelle Quirk’s *Teaching of English* wrote: “You can be sure that it will be very useful for both me and my friends who are interested in studying and teaching English.”<sup>63</sup> Students pleaded for English language books, such as the university student from Pécs who had studied English for five years and wrote: “Because of great lack of the most necessary and best books forming sources and ground for thorough studies, I have not been able to get

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> September [1965] Highlights, dated October 8, 1965, 4.

<sup>61</sup> December [1965] Highlights, dated January 13, 1965, 6.

<sup>62</sup> February [1966] Highlights, dated March 9, 1966, 6.

<sup>63</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1967, dated March 17, 1967, 4.

alone sufficiently enough means to improve my limited English.”<sup>64</sup> A Hungarian woman visiting London wrote to a PSPD sponsor in New York: “Now I stay in London for my holidays and I dare to write to you from here that I should feel very closed up at home if I did not get these books, not knowing anything about American literature of our days. Everything gets to Hungary much later and rather cautiously, from a definite point of view [...] They [the books] are [of] great help to me in teaching American and English literature at the Evening University.”<sup>65</sup>

An English lecturer at the Medical School of the University of Debrecen, who received a catalogue of textbooks from R. R. Bowker Co., New York, circulated the catalogue among friends and colleagues and asked for books to be sent to 17 different addresses in Debrecen, as well as to a professor in Brno, Czechoslovakia. He wrote: “I had a talk with a lot of my colleagues [...] all of whom are very eager to get a book or two of the rich material offered by your generous publisher. My friends and colleagues all teach at high schools or at the university, or else are scientists working at various institutes and clinics [...] In fact it took me quite a few weeks to contact all of them.” He then asked for three books on American literature.<sup>66</sup> An English teacher at the same Medical School, who had been requesting and acknowledging books not only for himself but also on behalf of his colleagues, acknowledged eight books received by eight different people, and asked for a number of short stories to be used in teaching English. He wrote: “You can imagine that the colleagues and collaborators of the above-mentioned young scientists and physicians came to me with similar requests [for books]. All of them have been studying English for many years [...] There is a great upswing in learning languages because all of the assistants at the clinics must pass a language exam before they are appointed adjuncts. Many of the leading persons at medical institutes, and lately young assistants, too, are given scholarships by American and English institutes—the chief requirement being a working knowledge of English. Besides teaching and learning from our official textbooks, it would be extremely important to have English books to read.”

<sup>64</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1967, dated July 18, 1967, 7.

<sup>65</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1967, dated November 10, 1967, 6.

<sup>66</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1968, dated March 14, 1968, 7.



He asked for “some of the simplified and a few unabridged famous classics for our Foreign Language Department.”<sup>67</sup> Another English lecturer at the same School wrote about his difficulties in following Budapest’s orders to start using audiovisual methods for teaching. The orders are “easier said than done. We have three tape-recorders and three simple projecting machines but no programmed material. In Hungary at present there are two Yugoslav systems used by the universities and language institutes, but they are impossible to get, first of all because they are so dear (tapes and film), and second, because the Budapest institutes ‘grab’ them when they are available.”<sup>68</sup>

A female teacher wrote: “As a ‘lonely teacher’ [of] English in a huge sea of Slav languages, I cannot get use of any English book, for there is some deep monetary obstacle [sic] which completely prevents me [from] purchasing any of them.”<sup>69</sup> Elemér Hankiss, a lecturer of English at the University of Szeged, wrote: “May I mention that the library of my department—a new one, it was founded only five years ago—is still very poor in books and periodicals. If you happen to have some free copies of any kinds of books and periodicals relating to English and American literature, history, language, you would greatly oblige us by sending us some of them.”<sup>70</sup> Lance Carter, an English teacher in Sárospatak, openly confirmed that this state of affairs continued to exist in Hungary. He wrote: “I have much difficulty in obtaining modern books for the teaching of English. You see, English was a banned subject for many years here, therefore the only books that are available are very ancient, some dating back to the beginning of the century.”<sup>71</sup> A Budapest metal physicist wrote: “It is impossible to order or to buy any Western thing (including educational materials) here. As you can read on the cover of the international editions of

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<sup>67</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1968, dated July 22, 1968, 8.

<sup>68</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1968, dated January 15, 1969, 15.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1969, dated July 11, 1969, 15. Elemér Hankiss (1928–) is a prominent Hungarian sociologist.

<sup>71</sup> Bi-monthly Report March–April 1971, 18, George C. Minden undated IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, January 1 to June 30, 1971, 4. HIA, George Minden Collection, Box 1.



several American magazines [...] they are available even in Thailand, but not in Hungary.”<sup>72</sup>

There was also a renewed interest in German language and literature, as well as in German literary and cultural periodicals, especially *Neuer Rundschau*. Six requests arrived for a German edition of Yevgeny Yevtushenko’s poetry, and 10 for a German anthology of Hungarian poetry on the 1956 Revolution.<sup>73</sup> Since German was better known in Hungary than English, there was a great interest in books in German dealing with America, in particular *Literatur in Amerika* by Malcolm Cowley and *Amerikanisches Philosophieren* (American philosophizing) by Herbert Marcuse. *Hör Zu* (Listen), which listed the programs of German radio stations, and the *Deutsche Ärzte Kalender* also elicited an excellent response. 30 copies of *Bilder und Abbilder* (Pictures and reflections), a collection of contemporary Italian short stories published by Biederstein, were mailed to writers, critics, and literary periodicals, 28 of whom acknowledged it and accepted the offered *Die Entdeckung Italiens* (The discovery of Italy).<sup>74</sup>

Interest in French literature, culture, and language increased throughout the duration of the book program, and many requests came for subscriptions to the literary and weekly section of *Le Monde*. A teacher wrote that the book he received “makes it easier for me to understand the modern French writers toward whom the door was closed for so many years.”<sup>75</sup> A well-known economist and his friends started a French-Hungarian Friendship Club and hoped to arrange French language courses.<sup>76</sup> A teacher of French in Szeged set up a French section in the primary and secondary schools where he taught. He also produced two shows attended by the French Ambassador to Hungary at which students recited French poems and read French prose from books sent through the book project.<sup>77</sup> Of the 100 *Nouveau*

<sup>72</sup> Bi-monthly Report September–October 1971, 20, George C. Minden undated IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, July 1 to December 31, 1971, 4. Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> January [1964] Highlights, dated February 7, 1964, 3.

<sup>74</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1968, dated January 15, 1968, 16.

<sup>75</sup> April [1964] Highlights, dated May 5, 1964, 3.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> July [1964] Highlights, dated August 10, 1964, 2. An account of the show appeared in the Csongrád county daily *Délmagyarország* published in Szeged.

*Petit Larousse* mailed in 1968, 82 were received and acknowledged. In December 1969, requests arrived for works by Pierre Gaxotte, Mircea Eliade, and Gaston Bouthoul. A Budapest literary critic who received *Albert Camus* by Conor Cruise O'Brien wrote: "Camus's essays are inaccessible for a man living away from France, and if the original texts are not available for someone, it follows that the handbooks about these works are also missing."<sup>78</sup>

*Religion and philosophy.* Books on religion and philosophy were in great demand with both clergymen and laymen, among them young people, teachers, and even party members. Since teachers could not attend church and had to take an active part in atheist indoctrination, their requests for religious books were noteworthy. The works of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and books on the Vatican Council and the ecumenical movement aroused considerable interest among both Catholics and Protestants. When recipients could choose second titles, Catholics nearly always requested books on Protestantism, and vice versa.<sup>79</sup> There was growing interest in mailings from religious institutions, such as the library of the Benedictine Order and the Greek Catholic Theological Seminary.<sup>80</sup> The receipt of Western books was acknowledged by an ever-increasing number of clergymen. One of them wrote: "Theological literature is of the highest importance for us and there can hardly be any other form of assistance which would be of greater value and usefulness to us."<sup>81</sup> A provincial parish priest asked for commentaries on the Vatican Ecumenical Council, and wrote: "I would be happy to have commentaries which would help me in the study and reflections of the Council. But we Hungarians do not have books of this kind."<sup>82</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Bi-monthly Report January–February 1971, 16, George C. Minden undated IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, January 1 to June 30, 1971, 4. HIA, George Minden Collection, Box 1. The original letter was written in French.

<sup>79</sup> April [1963] Highlights, dated May 6, 1963, 3.

<sup>80</sup> May [1963] Highlights, dated June 6, 1963, 2.

<sup>81</sup> April [1964] Highlights, dated May 5, 1964, 4.

<sup>82</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1967, dated July 18, 1967, 6.

Responses arrived from many seminary libraries, bishoprics, and other church groups, which were generally strictly controlled. They included the Archbishop of Kalocsa, the Bishopric of Székesfehérvár for a book on the Vatican Council, and the Archbishopric of Eger for Max Weber's *Religionssoziologie* (Sociology of religion). The Library of the Catholic Saint Stephen Society in Budapest also asked for books.<sup>83</sup> There was great interest in the Pope's journey to the United States. A Hungarian émigré in London transmitted confirmations for several books mailed to a Lutheran minister who had been forced by the regime into premature retirement, and offered the addresses of other clergymen being hindered by regime restrictions.<sup>84</sup> A woman physician working in Cuba thanked for Cardinal Bea's book on Christian unity, which had been sent to her in Hungary.<sup>85</sup> An architect who received Karl Adam's *The Christ of Faith* expressed his thanks, "because here religious books are not available at all."<sup>86</sup> Requests and acknowledgements for books on religion were also received from economists, scientists, and surprisingly, from a well-known communist journalist in Budapest, who thanked for the Oxford University Press edition of *The New Testament*, and wrote: "The ten years work of the translating commission [...] gives all readers a perfect guarantee to have in our time a very good holy text for reading, prayer, meditation, and sermon."<sup>87</sup> Two books of Catholic literature brought an enthusiastic response: *Le milieu divin* (Divine milieu) by Teilhard de Chardin and *The World's Great Catholic Literature* by G. N. Schuster. The Director of the Hungarian Benedictine College was overjoyed with the latter.<sup>88</sup> A university professor who received Catholic books by Bernanos, Claudel, and Teilhard de Chardin wrote: "My entire family is immersed in the books you sent. Our 'big' children, to whom we have given a careful Catholic and cultural education, have a great desire to know the life of Saint-Exupéry." A writer of atheist literature thanked for *Der Dialog* by Roger Garaudy, J. B. Metz, and Karl Rahner, and wrote: "It will

<sup>83</sup> January [1965] Highlights, dated February 5, 1965, 4.

<sup>84</sup> December [1963] Highlights, dated January 11, 1965, 3.

<sup>85</sup> May [1964] Highlights, dated June 10, 1964, 4.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>87</sup> June [1964] Highlights, dated July 17, 1964, 2.

<sup>88</sup> November [1965] Highlights, dated December 21, 1965, 4.

promote a useful and needed dialogue between believers and non-believers, Christians and Marxists.”<sup>89</sup>

A Budapest teacher who received a book on St. Gregory wrote: “The reading of his work communicates a feeling of peace through the calm of his writing. A wonderful achievement for a book, especially in a Europe which is not very much unlike the one of St. Gregory’s.” Another teacher in Székesfehérvár, who received a book on modern man and spirituality, commented: “Although I cannot consider myself a religious man, the noble ideas touched me profoundly.”<sup>90</sup> A Budapest teacher of English, who received *The New American Philosophers* by Andrew J. Reck, wrote: “It is not easy to get a book like that over here: and not only is it rather instructive and gives one an idea of modern American thought, but it also adds a lot to be used in discussions about ideology.”<sup>91</sup>

PSPD bought 750 copies of the last three issues of *Mérleg* (Balance), a quarterly published by the Hungarian Pax Romana, for mailing to Hungary. By December 1965, the magazine received 71 acknowledgements of receipt, 31 of them from parish priests, and the rest from bishops, theology professors, editors, high school teachers, and university students. The chief librarian of the Esztergom diocese wrote: “I have seen with great pleasure a friend’s copy of *Mérleg* and would appreciate it if you would send me back copies from the beginning and put us on your mailing list, for it is important that our priests be informed of foreign theological literature.” A priest in Győr wrote: “I [have been] a parish priest here for the last seven years, and feel that this publication would be of tremendous help in my work. I am willing to make any sacrifice to be put on your mailing list.”<sup>92</sup> Following the publication in *Mérleg* of an article about the Hungarian edition of *Le phénomène humain* (Az emberi jelenség), many requests were received for the Hungarian translation of books by Teilhard de Chardin. The

<sup>89</sup> Both quotes from Highlights Report May–June 1967, dated July 18, 1967, 7.

<sup>90</sup> Both quotes from March [1965] Highlights, dated April 5, 1965, 4.

<sup>91</sup> Bi-monthly Report May–June 1971, 17, George C. Minden undated IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, January 1 to June 30, 1971, 4. HIA, George Minden Collection, Box 1.

<sup>92</sup> December [1965] Highlights, dated January 13, 1966, 5.

mailing from Vienna of 120 copies of Teilhard's *Le milieu divin* in Hungarian produced 66 acknowledgements, plus 54 spontaneous requests from people who learned of the book from a friend. The sponsor, Opus Mystici Corporis Verlag, received 18 more spontaneous requests, most of them for *Teilhard de Chardin* by Ferenc Szabó. Letters not only came from priests, but also from professors, scientist, doctors, and writers.<sup>93</sup>

From a Protestant minister who received Robert Mac Afee's *The Spirit of Protestantism* came the following letter: "I am very grateful for this gift and do appreciate the work you are carrying out by creating cultural and spiritual connections with us and through us with our people."<sup>94</sup> The Reformed Church of Kecskemét, which received *The Protestant Mystics*, wrote: "We are very thankful to you, for the only opportunity to have modern books to us is the gift of foreign presses."<sup>95</sup> A Budapest teacher of languages received *The Writings of William James* by J. J. McDermott, and wrote: "It is rather comforting to read James or ideologically not engaged philosophy, hard to come by over here."<sup>96</sup> A medical professor thanked for Stephen Toulmin's *Philosophy of Science* and wrote that "it arrived just in time for quoting" in a new edition of his own book on philosophy and science.<sup>97</sup> A Protestant minister in the village of Szalkszentmárton who received *Offene Kirche, kritische Kirche* (Open Church, critical Church) by Werner Simpfendorfer and *Was wird aus der Kirche?* (What will become of the Church?) by Werner Jetter wrote in German to the sponsor: "Kreuz Verlag [a German publisher] is for me a window through which I can look into the world of theology and a little bit [into] the whole world."<sup>98</sup>

*Panorama des idées contemporaines*, edited by Gaëtan Picon and published by Occidental Press in Washington D.C., was translated in Hungarian under the title *Korunk szellemi körképe*. This book was

<sup>93</sup> March [1966] Highlights, dated April 11, 1966, 4.

<sup>94</sup> February [1965] Highlights, dated March 5, 1965, 3.

<sup>95</sup> December [1965] Highlights, dated January 13, 1966, 5.

<sup>96</sup> Highlights Report December 1969, dated January 7, 1970, 15.

<sup>97</sup> March [1965] Highlights, dated April 5, 1965, 5.

<sup>98</sup> Bi-monthly Report July–August 1970, 12, George C. Minden undated IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, July 1 to December 1970, 5. HIA, George Minden Collection, Box 1.

repeatedly cheered as the “first and only” work of its kind available and praised for its presentation in Hungarian of “cardinal theses.” It continued to lead in popularity, with a record number of acknowledgements and requests received, many of them spontaneous, from professors, students, and writers. Many requests came from people with whom there had been no previous contact. By 1966 and throughout successive years, it was the most popular book ever sent to Hungary, achieving a total of six editions. One elated economist wrote that he had long heard of the book and was overjoyed to finally have it in his hands. A philosopher asking for the book wrote: “[...] this book is such an anxiously preserved treasure of the one person who got it that I cannot reach it otherwise.”<sup>99</sup> Another recipient, after reading for hours in Picon’s book, wrote that it was “just the book [I] needed so long.”<sup>100</sup> A second Hungarian edition prompted another flood of enthusiastic thank-you letters and another steady stream of requests, especially from teachers and university students. Even an engineer in a provincial factory knew of the new edition. One recipient wrote: “It’s a special joy to me since many of the authors who contributed to this book were known only by their names, because their works have not been edited in Hungary.”<sup>101</sup>

A language teacher wrote: “Let me thank you heartily for the interesting and valuable book [by Picon] you sent me [...] It is not easy to get a book on contemporary thought from the ‘other side.’” From a publishing house editor came this letter: “I am convinced that this book would be welcome and very useful to many Hungarian specialists working in the intellectual field in some capacity, and even for all thinking and interested young people, students as well.”<sup>102</sup> A Hungarian author visiting the U.S. reported that books were sold in three “literary espresso bars” in Budapest, and that even in this market, “the Picon [book] was the most wanted one, selling for 70 to 80 forints—a day’s salary for a well-paid worker or a functionary.”<sup>103</sup> A student wrote: “In particular, the parts two and three are very interesting. These parts

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<sup>99</sup> April [1963] Highlights, dated May 6, 1963, 3.

<sup>100</sup> July [1963] Highlights, dated August 7, 1963, 1.

<sup>101</sup> March [1965] Highlights, dated April 5, 1965, 5.

<sup>102</sup> May [1965] Highlights, dated June 8, 1965, 4.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

survey the situation in the [fields of] sociology and psychology in the 'free world.' And what [is] the most important, the authors are not Marxist, and so, your writings are new to me because the works of Jaspers, Freud, Adler, Sartre, etc. are not published in Hungary."<sup>104</sup>

A grateful teacher wrote: "The book by Gaëtan Picon will be of great help to me in being well-informed of the achievements and spiritual currents of our time." Another teacher wrote: "We are Hungarian teachers and we are very interested in this book but we cannot receive it in Hungary. So we decided to write you and ask for your help."<sup>105</sup> A translator commented: "I have been so lucky as to gain a glance in the quite excellent, unique, and outstanding book in Hungarian translation by Gaëtan Picon [...] I would be extremely obliged to you if you had the kindness to let me have a copy of this milestone work."<sup>106</sup> An inventor wrote: "I was hunting for this book for the last three years without success, and it was like in a child's tale, when your most cherished wish gets fulfilled." A translator wrote: "The extracts are excellent and I have admired the good Hungarian translation. I should like to send a congratulation to the translators."<sup>107</sup> A poet wrote: "Looking through the book I wished minute by minute to have it myself too. I am a Hungarian poet, it could help me to know more the foreign science and literature."<sup>108</sup> A high school student said: "I saw somewhere your precious publication [...] I should be very grateful if you would be kind enough to send it to me if possible gratis, because I am thirsty for knowledge, but I am as poor as a church mouse."<sup>109</sup> Two clergymen in Rome supplied PSPD's distributor with the names of 44 Catholic seminarians who had seen Picon's book and who wanted to receive copies at their private addresses.<sup>110</sup> By March 1964, 150 confirmations of receipt had been received for the 300 copies mailed, and requests had been received from the head librarians of the National Széchényi Library in Budapest and from the Bishopric of

<sup>104</sup> September [1965] Highlights, dated October 8, 1965, 4.

<sup>105</sup> December [1964] Highlights, dated January 13, 1966, 3.

<sup>106</sup> January [1965] Highlights, dated February 5, 1965, 4.

<sup>107</sup> October [1965] Highlights, dated November 8, 1965, 6.

<sup>108</sup> November [1965] Highlights, dated December 21, 1965, 3.

<sup>109</sup> March [1966] Highlights, dated April 11, 1966, 6.

<sup>110</sup> January [1964] Highlights, dated February 7, 1964, 2.



Székesfehérvár. A correspondent apologized for his belated acknowledgement of Picon's book and wrote that he was in military service, as a result of which "from duty the soldier cannot write letters to foreign countries. Well now I'm a civilian again."<sup>111</sup>

An important new phenomenon in early 1969 was the appearance of spontaneous requests for books in Hungarian from Magyars living in Romania, mainly in Transylvania—presumably a reflection of Bucharest's more flexible foreign policies. There were five requests for Picon's *Korunk szellemi körképe* from Cluj (Kolozsvár) and one from Bucharest, and several requests for the same book from Magyars in Slovakia, of whom some acknowledged its receipt.<sup>112</sup> A correspondent from Budapest asking for *Az ember és világa* (Man and his world) by Ferenc Szabó explained: "For obvious reasons we are obliged to do without the most important new works in the field of religion and Roman Catholic ideological literature. In today's intellectual confusion, this makes accurate information hard to come by."<sup>113</sup>

*Hungarian exile and émigré publications.* Although it was known through visitors that émigré publications were avidly read in Hungary, PSPD seldom received direct confirmations of receipt or requests by mail. In general, because the censors were especially watchful of such publications, the smallest number of acknowledgements arrived for books and periodicals written in Hungarian. The same reluctance was evident for the works of Hungarian authors abroad written in languages of the free world. Despite this, several copies of *Új Látóhatár* (New horizon), an émigré literary magazine published in Munich, were requested from London by the head of the faculty of Hungarian Literature at the University of Warsaw, to give to his students and colleagues. A library historian in Esztergom requested a special issue of *Új Látóhatár* devoted to the poet Gyula Illyés.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>111</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1968, dated November 11, 1968, 15.

<sup>112</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1969, dated May 12, 1969, 17–18.

<sup>113</sup> Bi-monthly Report for May–June 1972, 17, George C. Minden undated IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, January 1 to June 30, 1972, 5. HIA, George Minden Collection, Box 1.

<sup>114</sup> February [1964] Highlights, dated March 6, 1964, 3.



In December 1964, a small increase was noted when several acknowledgments arrived for *Pilate: the Failure of Perfection* by William Juhász, a booklet that originally appeared in the *New Hungarian Quarterly*. An art historian wrote: "Having read Prof. Juhász's essay, the place and significance of the Hungarian writer Magda Szabó became absolutely clear to me [...]." <sup>115</sup> Juhász was PSPD's Hungarian national editor from 1958 to 1967. Other émigré books acknowledged were *History of Hungary* by Denis Sinor, *Inventing the Future* by Denis Gabor, and a work on Emperor Charles V by Mihály Ferdinándy, a professor at the University of Puerto Rico. There was great interest in the works of scientists of Hungarian origin such as John von Neumann's *The Computer and the Brain*. A very frank letter came from a Budapest high school teacher who asked for Sinor's *History of Hungary*: "As I am not a friend of our communist government, so I would like to read about transition after the World Wars." <sup>116</sup> A professor who received *Genesis*, a book of etchings by the émigré graphic artist Lajos Szalay who lived in New York, asked for the address of the artist, so that "I could express [...] to him my deep delight about his wonderful, expressive, symbolic drawings." <sup>117</sup> 30 copies of *Genesis* were mailed a few years later, and the receipt of 25 of them was confirmed—an 83% response. <sup>118</sup>

Hungarian titles requested in November and December 1969 included Gaëtan Picon's *Korunk szellemi körképe*, Teilhard de Chardin's *Az emberi jelenség*, Károly Kovács's *Hellenizmus, Róma, Zsidóság* (Hellenism, Rome, Judaism), and Ferenc Szabó's *Az ember és világa*. <sup>119</sup> In a rare occurrence, a correspondent thanked for the Hungarian translation of Boris Pasternak's poems, praising them for "the religious inspiration of the author and his delicate descriptive art," and asked for *Dr. Zhivago* and some of the poems in the original. <sup>120</sup> *Napló 1945–1957* (Diary 1945–1957) by the anti-communist writer Sándor Márai was mailed in 40 copies, and six acknowledgements were received by

<sup>115</sup> December [1964] Highlights, dated January 11, 1965, 3.

<sup>116</sup> March [1965] Highlights, dated April 5, 1965, 5.

<sup>117</sup> October [1965] Highlights, dated November 8, 1965, 5.

<sup>118</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1969, dated May 12, 1969, 16.

<sup>119</sup> Highlights Report December 1969, dated January 7, 1970, 13.

<sup>120</sup> February [1966] Highlights, dated March 9, 1966, 7.

June—better than usual for books in Hungarian by Hungarian émigré writers in the West.<sup>121</sup>

*Sociology.* A letter reported the founding of the Hungarian Institute of Sociological Research in Budapest, and pointed out how useful books sent from the West were for the new organization.<sup>122</sup> A sociologist, who received *The Language of Social Research*, wrote: “Being a translator of the American sociological literature into Hungarian—among others, I translated *The Lonely Crowd* [by David Riesman]—I am always grateful to receive classics of the American social sciences.”<sup>123</sup> The editor of *Budapester Rundschau*, writing for the first time to acknowledge receipt of *The Press of America*, said: “The book is of immense importance to me. It gives a full review of the interesting activity of the American press [...] I am waiting for your new lists of publications.”<sup>124</sup>

Miklós Tomka, secretary of the sociological group of the Society for the Popularization of the Sciences, described his work in connection with the society’s “free universities” and their graduate courses: “This is sometimes a very problematical task, without books, without normal sociological training at the universities [...] For the success of our work we would ask you please to help us further on. In the next year we will have courses on the sociology of religion about secularism. I think it is necessary to use the chief works in this branch of the sociologists of the USA.” He then asked for two American works on secularism.<sup>125</sup>

*Economics.* Letters about books on economics were relatively short, but worth noting. In September 1964, the library of the National Planning Office requested books for the first time, and wrote: “We are very interested in any studies, pamphlets, or books on economics in the Western hemisphere.”<sup>126</sup> By the end of the year, a growing interest in books on economics and management was observed. This may be

<sup>121</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1968, dated July 22, 1968, 7.

<sup>122</sup> March [1963] Highlights, dated April 8, 1963, 1.

<sup>123</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1967, dated July 18, 1967, 5.

<sup>124</sup> April [1966] Highlights, dated May 11, 1966, 5.

<sup>125</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1969, dated July 11, 1969, 15.

<sup>126</sup> September [1964] Highlights, dated October 15, 1964, 2.

explained by a December 12, 1964 Radio Budapest broadcast commenting on the great lack of books on plant management, labor and sociology, political economy, and particularly on the science of management. "The chief reason for this," the broadcast said, "is the lack of authors. Paradoxically, this is also the main impediment to the publication of the basic works of the modern bourgeois economists. There is no lack of bourgeois economists, but there is a lack of Hungarian researchers who could write an analytical critical introduction to these Western books [...] Hungarian economists, with a few exceptions, either do not deal enough with the trends of ideas of Western economics, or do not deal with them in a sufficiently critical and analytical manner."<sup>127</sup> The leading economist in one of Hungary's biggest coal trusts asked for books on macro and micro management to help him in his work, because "only but a few of the foreign literature is known here."<sup>128</sup> An economist wrote: "I am dealing with these subjects (population urbanism, regional planning) and it would be very important for my research work to get acquainted with the newest results of the literature in this field."<sup>129</sup>

An economist, referring to the debate about the introduction of a new economic planning system in Hungary, wrote: "To improve our knowledge of welfare and planning, discussing the book *Beyond the Welfare State: Economic Planning and its Implications* by Prof. [Gunnar] Myrdal would in our judgement be profitable." The writer explained that she had been "refused by the publishers because of currency difficulties." Another economist, who received *Automation: Industrialization Comes of Age* by William François, wrote: "For an economist, it was really important to read a serious study about that very important subject. I have much profit from the content of the book."<sup>130</sup> A student at the Budapest University of Economics, who requested *Economics: an Introductory Analysis* by Paul Samuelson, explained: "It is very difficult for me here to get acquainted with 'Western' theories."<sup>131</sup> Books on economics written in German were also in demand. An econo-

<sup>127</sup> December [1964] Highlights, dated January 11, 1965, 6.

<sup>128</sup> October [1965] Highlights, dated November 8, 1965, 6.

<sup>129</sup> November [1965] Highlights, dated December 21, 1965, 5.

<sup>130</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1967, dated March 17, 1967, 5.

<sup>131</sup> December [1969] Highlights, dated January 7, 1970, 15.

mist who did not read English passed the book he had received on to another economist, who did read English, and who in turn translated parts of the book for his friend.<sup>132</sup> The Library of the National Planning Office asked for Eugenio Scalfari's *Le néo-capitalisme italien* (Italian neo-Capitalism) and Guy Caire's *L'économie yougoslave* (The Yugoslav economy).<sup>133</sup>

*Medicine and psychology.* A lecturer who taught English to medical students at the University of Medicine in Debrecen wrote: "We lack English medical texts and papers on different medical subjects." He asked for a collection of short stories and famous American and English novels so that "the students would have plenty of opportunity to practice the English language."<sup>134</sup> A doctor who received *Blakiston's Pocket Medical Dictionary* edited by Alphonso R. Gennaro, was asked by the editorial board of the review *Medical Librarian* to write a paper "about the medical dictionaries as we see them in Central Europe, discussing and comparing the different types, forms, contents, etc. of the most used medical dictionaries."<sup>135</sup> A biology teacher in Polgár, who requested two books on genetics, explained: "Genetics causes some difficulty for the students. I would like to help them [...] We have some gifted students who will study further in the universities. For these students I lead a special biological course to prepare them for the entrance examination. In this course I would like to use the above-mentioned titles."<sup>136</sup> A Budapest psychiatrist, who asked for books on psychoanalysis, psychopathology, and social psychology, wrote: "I suffer [from] a chronic shortage of American publications pertaining to my work."<sup>137</sup>

The academic Sándor Szalai, who had been imprisoned for five years under the Rákosi regime, received Gordon Allport's *The Nature of Prejudice*, and wrote: "This work is to be regarded as a classic not

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<sup>132</sup> May [1965] Highlights, dated June 8, 1965, 3.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>134</sup> July [1964] Highlights, dated August 10, 1964, 2.

<sup>135</sup> February [1965] Highlights, dated March 5, 1965, 4.

<sup>136</sup> Monthly Report for September–October 1970, 16, George C. Minden undated IAC Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, July 1 to December 31, 1970, 4. HIA, George Minden Collection, Box 1.

<sup>137</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1967, dated July 18, 1967, 5.

only of social psychology but also of scientific ethics personified by the example of its author. A great book of a great man in a great cause [...] When I met Professor Allport for the last time in Paris on the Tensions Project Symposium of UNESCO (1948) I disagreed with him on some important points [...] Now very shortly afterwards I found out the hard way that he was right in practically every point where I disagreed with him. So caution is indicated.”<sup>138</sup> A Budapest psychologist wrote: “I am very much interested in American psychological literature. I used to write articles on the psychological books I read, in that way I hope to contribute to the better understanding of American psychology in Hungary. Please send me if possible books on psychology, most of all on social psychology.”<sup>139</sup>

A medical student requested books on positivism and idealism, because “we learn philosophy here but only dialectical materialism.”<sup>140</sup> 24 of the 30 copies of *Introduction à la psychoanalyse* (Introduction to psychoanalysis) by Sigmund Freud were acknowledged.<sup>141</sup> A Budapest psychologist, who was also involved in scientific research and who had received a book on family psychology, wrote that she worked with persons showing various kinds of deviant behavior as well as with their families, and that the books would be useful in her work. “By using this and similar books,” she wrote, “I hope to contribute [...] also to the better knowledge of psychology world literature in Hungary and modestly also to the advancement of science.”<sup>142</sup>

*Art.* Interest in art, especially in contemporary modern Western art, remained strong throughout the years. An art historian wrote that a book on modern American painting gave him a “completely new idea about modern art.”<sup>143</sup> From a painter in Budapest came the following letter: “Unfortunately, we know very little about the fine art of the contemporary world. Here is only naturalism and a weak realism,

<sup>138</sup> May [1963] Highlights, dated June 6, 1963, 3.

<sup>139</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1967, dated November 10, 1967, 7.

<sup>140</sup> November [1963] Highlights, dated December 6, 1963, 2.

<sup>141</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1968, dated January 15, 1969, 19.

<sup>142</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1969, dated May 12, 1969, 15.

<sup>143</sup> October [1963] Highlights, dated November 8, 1963, 2.

but this is not a satisfactory possibility. I should like to make a library for young artists in Hungary. And ask your aid for this. We are interested in American paintings, Rothko, Tobey, Gottlieb, Motherwell, etc. in particular.”<sup>144</sup> A female painter who received a book on abstract painting wrote: “For me and my colleagues it is very frustrating to work here where [...] abstract and experimental art is not recognized.” She reported that she had organized at her own initiative, and in a private atelier, an exhibit of the works of four West German artists, the very first exhibit of such artists shown in Budapest. “I have no gallery, in Hungary no private gallery exists.”<sup>145</sup> Another artist frankly stated that abstract art was “a style which is not accepted in my country.”<sup>146</sup>

The mailing of art books was enthusiastically received. In particular, the books *Concise History of Modern Sculpture* and *Concise History of Modern Painting*, both by Herbert Read, elicited many acknowledgements. The former was sent to 75 artists, of whom 35 responded, and the latter to 45 painters, with 28 acknowledging the book. Many correspondents lamented the lack of books on modern art in Hungary. A student who saw some books on fine arts circulating among fellow students made his feelings clear: “Generally books like these are unattainable for us, not at least on account of a high level of cost, an amount equal to two-three weeks wages for a skilled worker. This means that we, students, are not able to buy any. We cannot hear nearly anything about the greatest futurists, cubists, surrealists of this century, or when we hear or read anything, it is condemnation or derision. The masterpieces of Picasso and Braque, considered as classics [...] were not evaluated so far. Salvatore [Salvador] Dalí, J. Pollock, Miró? If I have ever seen five of their masterpieces. Dear Sirs, I request you to help me and my friends.”<sup>147</sup> A man who received a subscription to a German art magazine wrote: “I thank you for sending this magazine which each month gives great pleasure to me and my friends, many of whom are artists.”<sup>148</sup>

<sup>144</sup> February [1966] Highlights, dated March 9, 1966, 5.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> March [1966] Highlights, dated April 11, 1966, 5.

<sup>147</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1967, dated July 18, 1967, 6.

<sup>148</sup> October [1965] Highlights, dated November 8, 1965, 5.

A correspondent who taught sketching and drawing to 10 to 14 year old girls and boys, and who received a book about the Lincoln Center, wrote: "My pupils are making interesting children's drawings and we should like to be in connection with American schools in order to exchange each other's drawings made by the American and Hungarian children." She asked to be put in contact with one or two schools in Washington, D.C.<sup>149</sup> A Budapest painter who received an American art book wrote: "[All] information is a great aid for our artistic development, so your book also. We young Hungarian painters and sculptors [...] are interested in especially [...] present-day American fine arts because it is at the moment the most advanced in the world."<sup>150</sup> A student interested in France and French painting wrote: "Unfortunately here in Hungary, we have only Russian paintings. Because of that I ask you to please send me *Histoire illustrée de la peinture* [Illustrated history of painting]."<sup>151</sup> There were several successful mailings of art books: *American Art since 1900* by Barbara Rose, 50 copies sent, 41 received; André Malraux's *Museum without Walls*, 60 sent, 50 acknowledged; and *Art and Technics* by Lewis Mumford, 50 sent, 43 received, with acceptance of another book free of charge. 37 of 40 copies sent of *Die Gemäldegalerie im kunsthistorischen Museum Wien* (The paintings gallery in the Vienna Art History Museum) by Günther Heinz were acknowledged.<sup>152</sup>

*Theatre*. The mailing of *Theatre 1965: Die Chronik und Bilanz eines Theaterjahres* (Theatre 1965: Chronicle and balance of a theatrical year), published by Friedrich Verlag, was enthusiastically received, with 40 out of 50 copies acknowledged. A stage designer wrote: "The whole format of the publication is very beautiful and not only I but my colleagues liked it very much." A student commented: "The book was for me not only a pleasant reading but also a great help in my literary studies." The music critic of the largest Hungarian cultural

<sup>149</sup> December [1965] Highlights, dated January 13, 1966, 5.

<sup>150</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1969, dated May 12, 1969, 16.

<sup>151</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1968, dated May 16, 1968, 5.

<sup>152</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1968, dated November 11, 1968, 16, and Highlights Report November–December 1968, dated January 15, 1969, 16.



periodical wrote: "I would also like to draw your attention to the theatre in Hungary, especially the field of the musical theatre (Opera, ballet). Perhaps some day you will also be interested in something in Hungary."<sup>153</sup> András Benedek, a leading dramatist who received a book on the British theatre, wrote that several recent English plays had already been staged in Budapest, and that he hoped to translate and perform still more.<sup>154</sup>

The drama editor of *Nagyvilág* (World), a Budapest literary monthly, received a book offer and asked if instead of the books listed, he could get a subscription to *Theater Heute* (Theatre today). "Unfortunately," he wrote, "our contact with the life of the theatre in West Germany is almost zero. I think that regular reading of your, so we hear, excellent magazine would help us in this respect."<sup>155</sup> Artisjus, the Hungarian Office for the Protection of Author's Rights, asked for *Ionesco* by Richard N. Coe, stating: "One of our publishing houses would like to consider the possibilities of a translation into Hungarian." An actor in Budapest, who received a book on American dramatic literature, wrote: "Being an actor myself I highly appreciate it as a very instructive, comprehensive, and authoritative work, which offers me enormous help in sensing the trends and achievements of American dramas, even those staged and produced on our own stages here."<sup>156</sup>

*Architecture.* In 1963, George Callway Verlag, a German sponsor, sent a special representative to Hungary to see if a magazine article on Hungarian architecture would be feasible and worthwhile, as well as to expand contacts concerning book projects among architects. He reported on the high standards in Hungarian architecture, and stressed the enthusiasm for Western architectural theories and techniques of all the architects he contacted.<sup>157</sup> An architect thanked for *Urban Renewal* by Leo Grebler, and said he was preparing a dissertation on the subject. "Thus, I found Mr. Grebler's book to be one of the most important and valuable part[s] of my examination until

<sup>153</sup> Highlights Report January–February, dated March 17, 1967, 5.

<sup>154</sup> April [1963] Highlights, dated May 6, 1963, 3.

<sup>155</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1968, dated May 10, 1968, 5.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>157</sup> September [1963] Highlights, dated October 4, 1963, 2.



now.”<sup>158</sup> A Budapest student of architecture wrote to a French sponsor: “Unfortunately for us in Hungary, it is hardly possible to find Western editions.”<sup>159</sup>

Many requests came from institutions, such as agricultural, technical, and industrial institutes and faculties, as well as from provincial planning offices. The director of the Vas County Planning Office, who received *Town Design* by Edward David Mills and *The Modern Factory* by Frederick Gibberd, expressed his thanks for the gifts, and wrote: “I am sure these books will give us a lot of inspiration in our work and will be of great help to us. Our Bureau counts as a middle-sized one here in Hungary, employing 25–30 architects and civil engineers, and an adequate number of draftsmen, about 120 in all.”<sup>160</sup> 40 copies of *Wohnen und Bauen in Japan* (Living and building in Japan) by Werner Blaser were mailed and 34 acknowledged.<sup>161</sup>

*Cinema.* 80 copies of *Film Review 1966–1968* were mailed, and 65 of them were acknowledged. Of the 40 copies of *New Cinema in the USA* by Roger Manwell, the receipt of 33 was confirmed.<sup>162</sup>

*Music.* A Hungarian student wrote a letter about listening to jazz on Voice of America broadcasts and about buying records on the “black market,” and concluded: “You cannot imagine the hunger for jazz behind the Iron Curtain.”<sup>163</sup> From a jazz enthusiast who received *Esquire’s World of Jazz* came the following letter: “We have a chapter of ‘Friends of Music USA,’ an international jazz club formed by Willis Conover of the Voice of America among his listeners [...] We already have a nice jazz library and it now needs a basic jazz book for our time: *The Encyclopedia of Jazz in the Sixties* by Leonard Feather.”<sup>164</sup> A composer working for the Hungarian radio wrote: “You gave me consid-

<sup>158</sup> April [1965] Highlights, dated May 4, 1965, 5.

<sup>159</sup> Highlights Report December 1969, dated January 7, 1970, 15.

<sup>160</sup> December [1964] Highlights, dated January 11, 1965, 4.

<sup>161</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1968, dated November 11, 1968, 15.

<sup>162</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1968, dated January 15, 1969, 16, and Highlights Report March–April 1969, dated May 12, 1969, 16.

<sup>163</sup> February [1964] Highlights, dated March 6, 1964, 2.

<sup>164</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1967, dated November 10, 1967, 7.

erable joy by sending me Paul Collaer's book *Modern Music* [...] I am currently working on one of the scripts for the Hungarian television program 'Musical Hours' and I found this book to be an unexpected and excellent help in my work."<sup>165</sup> Another composer, who had received a book about Béla Bartók, wrote: "It is a good feeling that the great son of the Hungarian nation is appreciated throughout the world. It has special value for us since for a long time we did not know much about his years in America. I was very glad to read Agatha Fassett's *Bartok's American Years*."<sup>166</sup>

*Travel books.* Travel books on Western Europe were gratefully received. A geographer, who had traveled along the Rhine some 30 years earlier and received the book *Der Rhein*, wrote: "Such books are actually the only links which connect us now with my hopes as a young man and with my original goals in life."

*Politics, law, and ideology.* Towards the end of 1964, some books that strongly criticized the communist ideology were requested, such as Alexander Rüstow's *Orstbestimmung der Gegenwart*, published in English as *Freedom and Domination*. PSPD had mailed the book some years earlier, but had received no acknowledgements. A university student who received *Maps of the World Crisis* by Jack Bloomfield wrote: "Reading the explanatory notes and generally the text part of the book, I will learn something about how they look upon the same events in the West that our newspapers write most about. Needless to say, the two standpoints are vastly different."<sup>167</sup> Some requests for dangerous books, normally distributed through the person-to-person program or mailed to institutions, continued to arrive. There were occasional requests for books on Trotsky, Pasternak, and even Djilas. A law professor in Pécs, who acknowledged B. H. Sumner's *A Short History of Russia*, wrote: "I would be very glad if you would send me the work of Milovan Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin*."<sup>168</sup>

<sup>165</sup> March [1965] Highlights, dated April 5, 1965, 4.

<sup>166</sup> November [1965] Highlights, dated December 21, 1965, 4.

<sup>167</sup> February [1965] Highlights, dated March 5, 1965, 3.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 5.

A law professor in Pécs, who received Sidney Hook's *Law and Philosophy*, wrote: "In Hungary, natural law has no place in the university, and so that is unknown [...] The book is very interesting and instructive compared with Hungarian theory."<sup>169</sup> In addition to the many copies of the German translation of Mihajlo Mihajlov's *Moscow Summer 1964* distributed to East European visitors to the West, some were also mailed. The first acknowledgement arrived in December 1965 from the Library of the Hungarian Parliament.<sup>170</sup> Requests were also received for Herman Kahn's *On Thermonuclear War* and Friedrich A. Hayek's *The Constitution of Liberty*.<sup>171</sup>

*Letters of special interest.* A very candid Hungarian university student wrote: "When I receive a Western magazine that is very comforting for me because I may see that men live without restriction and in happiness [across] the Iron Curtain."<sup>172</sup> A professor of the University of Oslo wrote to a German sponsor in Stuttgart on behalf of Professor István Bibó of Budapest, asking that Armin Mohler's *Was die Deutschen fürchten: Angst von der Politik* (What the Germans are afraid of: Fear of politics) should not be sent to Bibó personally but to his office, the Library of the Central Statistical Office in Budapest. After recalling Bibó's role during the 1956 Revolution, after which he received a life sentence and was subsequently pardoned in 1963, the Oslo professor wrote: "Now he works as an assistant [there] and wants to resume his scientific research work but, as you can imagine, has not the means to purchase books from abroad. I met Prof. Bibó in November 1966 in Budapest when he asked me to help him in getting the necessary books."<sup>173</sup> Gyula Germanus, a well-known professor of Islamic studies at the University of Budapest and visiting professor at the Universities of Cairo and Damascus who received a number of books, wrote: "At present I prepare a voluminous work on Arabic literature in America and I wonder which American institute could help me to publish this book in English."<sup>174</sup>

<sup>169</sup> October [1965] Highlights, dated November 8, 1965, 4.

<sup>170</sup> December [1965] Highlights, dated January 13, 1966, 7.

<sup>171</sup> Highlights Report November 1969, dated December 5, 1969, 14.

<sup>172</sup> May [1964] Highlights, dated June 10, 1964, 3.

<sup>173</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1967, dated November 10, 1967, 7.

<sup>174</sup> June [1964] Highlights, dated July 17, 1964, 2.

A Hungarian doctor, the grandson of the famous physician Ignác Semmelweiss, asked a sponsor to help prepare a bibliography of his grandfather's works.<sup>175</sup> The *New Hungarian Quarterly* in Budapest, a high standard propaganda publication, not only acknowledged the receipt of books, but even advised sponsors as to what books they thought should be translated, and often commented critically on the books they received. The literary editor said of Edgar Nye's *Modern Essays*: "The volume is of great value to me, being a critic and literary historian, translator of many works of English and American drama and fiction," but, he added, "the list [of contributors] seems to me, to be quite frank, a little too American."<sup>176</sup> A Hungarian professor at the University of Khartoum in Sudan wrote: "I gratefully acknowledged receipt of the book *Une idée neuve. La Démocratie* (A new idea: Democracy) by Joseph Rován. Despite the somewhat surprising title, the author keeps his promise and truly reveals some new aspects of democracy, a concept so often used and abused." He asked for *Le milieu divin* by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. In a letter sent one year later, he was even more frank: "In the middle of the desert which is not only geographical but also intellectual, I appreciate your kindness even more."<sup>177</sup> Professor Miklós Szenczi, the head of the English Department of the Loránd Eötvös University in Budapest who had spent a year in the U.S. with a Ford Foundation fellowship, thanked for *A Literary History of England* edited by A. C. Baugh, and wrote: "This work proves to be of inestimable value now that I am writing the chapters on medieval and Renaissance literature for a history of world literature to be published in Hungarian."<sup>178</sup>

Some letters openly or by implication indicated that the book recipient was glad of the opportunity to compare Western thought with the regime's viewpoint on a given subject. A recipient of *Society and Culture* by Francis Merrill wrote: "So much has been written in the newspapers about racial differences in the United States that I am very interested to read the chapter on 'Race and Society.'" A Budapest

<sup>175</sup> April [1964] Highlights, dated May 5, 1964, 2.

<sup>176</sup> December [1965] Highlights, dated January 13, 1966, 6-7.

<sup>177</sup> January [1965] Highlights, dated February 5, 1965, 5, and April [1966] Highlights, dated May 11, 1966, 6.

<sup>178</sup> Highlights Report November-December 1967, dated January 18, 1968, 6.

lawyer who received Sartre's *L'être et le néant* (*Being and Nothingness*) wrote: "Naturally I know Marxism very well since there is socialism in our country. But as I wrote previously, I am interested in contemporary Western philosophy, especially the French." A professor who received *The American Political Process* by Leonard Levy and John Roche wrote rather ambiguously: "Not only a teacher but other readers can see clearly the nexus between ideological and operational substance."<sup>179</sup>

Two correspondents offered the idea that books to Hungary should be sent through official Hungarian channels. A psychologist suggested that "before you mail books to Hungary, first get in touch with the Európa Publishing House in Budapest." A language professor wrote: "Try to get in touch with the Hungarian Import Office. It is called 'Kultura' [...] Perhaps you could export your books to Hungary."<sup>180</sup> A former ministry official who received *Europa* by Gerhardt Preuschen wrote: "For us, who sit at the edge of Europe, and who for this reason try to hold firm as much as possible, every expression from our continent has a higher value. Perhaps I can conclude with this quote: 'We carry our sorrows in the nothingness and lament over the lost beauty.'"<sup>181</sup> An economist pursuing "electric researches" asked for help in getting 250 grams of wire of a specific size "made of pure aluminum." He was emboldened to ask for it because for the past three years, he had been receiving very interesting and precious books from different editors.<sup>182</sup> In a letter written in English, a Russian student in Budapest asked for Picon's *Panorama* in Hungarian and for Walt W. Rostow's *The U.S. in the World Arena* and *Prospects of Red China*. He concluded: "Be quick if you want to help me. I shall leave Budapest in June. P.S. Sir, if you are a lady, I am brave enough to kiss your hand."<sup>183</sup>

An African student studying in Budapest asked for books in English on chemistry and physics, and wrote: "I shall be unable to pay in dollars because [in] this country where I am they don't allow us to use dollars and if you are found with dollars, you will be prison [sic].

<sup>179</sup> December [1965] Highlights, dated January 13, 1966, 6.

<sup>180</sup> April [1965] Highlights, dated May 4, 1965, 5.

<sup>181</sup> November [1965] Highlights, dated December 21, 1965, 5.

<sup>182</sup> July [1964] Highlights, dated August 10, 1964, 2.

<sup>183</sup> February [1966] Highlights, dated March 9, 1966, 6.

And in addition, they don't have science books in English. They have [them] in their own language."<sup>184</sup> A woman in Budapest, whose son lived in the West and who hoped to get a passport, thanked for Vincent Cronin's *The Florentine Renaissance*, and wrote: "I was deeply touched to find this beautiful book [...] It permits 'traveling' to places to which it is not easy to arrive from my country."<sup>185</sup> A letter from a Budapest correspondent addressed to the IAC showed how word of the availability of foreign books circulated: "I have found your notice in a book I have bought in a secondhand bookshop and I am sending along this letter to ask you whether you could let me have a book on American life and institutions."<sup>186</sup> Another Budapest correspondent thanked for *Basic American Documents*, which he found very useful for his work, and gave notice that from April 1968 onwards his new address would be the Hungarian Embassy in Beijing.<sup>187</sup>

Thoughtful and often constructive criticism of the books sent was another indication that they were carefully read and of value to the recipients. A teacher at the Academy of Dramatic Arts took the trouble to suggest the names of people whom she thought should have been included in *Le dictionnaire illustré des auteurs français* (Illustrated dictionary of French authors). A well-known statistician and cartographer carefully reviewed the *Viking-Columbia Desk Encyclopedia* and wrote a lengthy memorandum calling the editor's attention to a number of errors and omissions. Most of his corrections were justified and his letter was forwarded to the Encyclopedia's editors.<sup>188</sup>

At times, book recipients felt that Hungary's contribution was not properly honored in a given book. The director of the Hungarian National Office for Translations, who received a volume of the Fischer Lexikon, wondered: "How is it possible that there is not a single word in the Lexikon about Lajos Kossuth, the greatest freedom fighter of the Hungarian nation, the leader of the freedom fight of 1848–49, when there are detailed descriptions of many other histor-

<sup>184</sup> December [1964] Highlights, dated January 11, 1965, 5.

<sup>185</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1968, dated November 11, 1968, 15.

<sup>186</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1968, dated May 10, 1968, 5.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>188</sup> December [1965] Highlights, dated January 13, 1966, 7.

ical figures of much lesser significance.”<sup>189</sup> Another correspondent, while praising *Shakespeare in Europe*, an anthology edited by Oswald Winter, protested: “Hungary has not been given sufficient credit for its Shakespearian writings, including the publication of his complete works in Hungary twice in the last decade only, the translation of various plays, comedies, and dramas, and many articles, essays, and works of comparative literature.”<sup>190</sup> A Hungarian high school teacher, who acknowledged the receipt of Edna L. Furness’s *Spelling for the Millions*, wrote an unusual tongue-in-cheek letter, parodying the “bad Americans”: “It certainly will help me a great deal with my teaching. Thank you very much. But what kind of people are you: how can you send books without any political propaganda and without ‘exploitation’ [...] Oh, those ‘bad Americans!’”<sup>191</sup>

A correspondent in Budapest thanked for *An Intensive Course in English* by Charles Fries and Robert Lado, and wrote that he and three other students of English language and literature had decided in 1966 to reform English teaching in Hungary. “It was considered rather as a utopia then, since we had to compete with institutions in [a] monopolistic state, we had no name, no right to say we teach better. Yet in two years we established our reputation and within the limits of our possibilities we became a very prosperous ‘institution’ [...] We can get on quite well on our own without official support, the only thing where we have problems is how to get the books needed. [...] It is rather difficult to obtain certain books that are reporting recent achievements in education, linguistics, and language teaching. Even if there is a copy in libraries, there are so many research workers who want to read it that a poor student hasn’t got any chance to get it.”<sup>192</sup>

A Budapest correspondent wrote: “I just keep my fingers crossed for the success and safe return of the brave American crew in Apollo 11, on the way to the moon!” Several other correspondents commented on the success of the Apollo 11 mission. A student wrote: “All of my congratulations [...] to you and to the American nation that the

<sup>189</sup> January [1965] Highlights, dated February 5, 1965, 5.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> April [1965] Highlights, dated May 4, 1965, 5.

<sup>192</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1968, dated July 22, 1968, 7–8.

American spacemen landed on the Moon.”<sup>193</sup> An engineer in Budapest wrote: “I am [...] an admirer and sometimes enjoyer of English or better told American literature. [Unfortunately] there are only very poor possibilities here to pick up sometimes a book or two in second-hand bookshops and they are mostly outdated from the period before the Second World War [...] Perhaps there are sometimes possibilities to come across older or damaged books with you, which you would throw away otherwise but which would be of immense value for me [...] Unfortunately I am not in a position to buy from you in the ordinary way so I am forced to beg for books of you.”<sup>194</sup>

This last letter sums up very well why so many Hungarians and East Europeans considered the Western books they received as an unexpected gift from unknown benefactors.

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<sup>193</sup> The quotes are from Highlights Report July–August 1969, dated September 16, 1969, 14, and Highlights Report September 1969, dated October 6, 1969, 13.

<sup>194</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1970, dated March 10, 1970, 17.





## CHAPTER 17

# Letters from Romania under the Ceașescu Regime

Between July 1956 and December 1959, a total of 97,000 books were mailed to Romania, but only 218 responses with 146 requests for books were received—a rather discouraging result.<sup>1</sup> Very few letters arrived during March (22 responses and 28 requests) and April 1963 (21 and 10). Minden reported: “The Rumanian regime’s ongoing reassessment of cultural relations with the West was still affecting the number of responses, and no discernible trend came out of the few letters received in April.”<sup>2</sup>

In May 1963, the Romanian Academy of Sciences confirmed the receipt of a dictionary and requested six other specialized reference works. In July, 121 responses and 15 requests arrived. Friendly acknowledgements of receipt came from government agencies such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Academy of Sciences, and the State Enterprise for Foreign Trade. Letters from the Cantacuzino Institute of Microbiology, Parasitology, and Epidemiology, and the Ion Mincu Architectural Institute in Bucharest made specific mention of keeping up contacts with the sponsors. Mailings to private individuals seemed to be problematic. A professor who failed to receive a book on twen-

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<sup>1</sup> Free Europe Organizations and Publications, Mailing Operations, Monthly Report No. 41, December 1959, 1–2. Courtesy of John P. C. Matthews.

<sup>2</sup> Memorandum to the President [FEC] from George C. Minden, April [1963] Highlights, dated May 6, 1963, 3. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Microfiche Provisional Box 3. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotes throughout this chapter originate from this source.

tieth-century architecture and a catalogue that had been announced asked for details on the shipment, and requested the sponsor to try sending the materials again.<sup>3</sup> In August, half of the 31 requests received were in response to an offer of travel books about European cities and countries. By September, still relatively few letters were arriving (38 responses with 30 requests), but there was a growing variety in the kinds of works requested as well as in the category of respondents. One architect, though enthusiastic about the book he received, refused an offer of more books as long as he could not repay the person in whose name the book was sent.<sup>4</sup> However, by October, an IAC gift list offer elicited 45 responses for 50 lists mailed, and two Romanian magazines favorably reviewed two French works they had received.<sup>5</sup>

The number of personal letters increased in November, many of them signed by regime officials. Responses (91) and requests (96) received from Romania were still very modest as compared to Poland (2,700/1,627), Hungary (2,523/1,815), and Czechoslovakia (632/940), but the country was ahead of Bulgaria (63/41). In June 1964, 116 responses and 134 requests were received, and in July, 83 responses and 171 requests came in.<sup>6</sup> The Romanian program reached new highs in the second half of the year, with 179 books acknowledged and 294 requested in September, and 98 acknowledged and 149 requested in December. By then, Romania was ahead of Bulgaria, but still far behind the several thousands of acknowledgements and requests received from Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia.<sup>7</sup>

1965 started with more new highs, with 194 books acknowledged and 331 requested in February, and 243 books acknowledged and 439 requested in March. Letters came from all parts of the country: a teacher in Craiova, an architect in Arad, the Artists Union in Galați, as well as libraries in Cluj, Timișoara, and Tîrgu Mureș (spelled Târgu Mureș today).<sup>8</sup> The number of letters received increased significantly in April 1965, with 403 letters as compared to 226 in March. They

<sup>3</sup> July [1963] Highlights, dated August 7, 1963, 1–2.

<sup>4</sup> September [1963] Highlights, dated October 4, 1963, 4.

<sup>5</sup> October [1963] Highlights, dated November 8, 1963, 2.

<sup>6</sup> July [1964] Highlights, dated August 10, 1964, 1.

<sup>7</sup> December [1964] Highlights, dated January 11, 1965, 1.

<sup>8</sup> February [1965] Highlights, dated March 5, 1965, 6 and 8.

included 272 requests for 668 books, as compared with 144 requests for 439 books in March. Many people and institutions sent in letters and requested books for the first time, and an increasing number of letters arrived from provincial towns as well as from large cities.<sup>9</sup> During the last two months of 1965, letters received topped 500, as did the number of both acknowledged and requested books. In December, 533 books were acknowledged and 639 requested. 126 people wrote for the first time, and 46 of them were new names that the PSPD did not have in its files.<sup>10</sup> Romanian figures continued to grow steadily. During the first half of 1966, the receipt of 4,890 books was acknowledged, and 4,255 were requested.<sup>11</sup> For the entire year, the receipt of 16,756 books was acknowledged, and 18,397 were requested, placing Romania second behind Hungary and Poland, and first ahead of Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria, respectively—a spectacular increase.<sup>12</sup> 1968 saw a fantastic jump with 19,074 books acknowledged and 36,226 requested, twice as many as the year before. This put Romania second behind Czechoslovakia for books acknowledged and first before all other target countries for books requested.<sup>13</sup>

*Institutions.* Many Romanian newspapers, periodicals, museums, universities, and other institutions regularly acknowledged the books sent to them, including *Cinema* in Bucharest, *Neue Literatur* in Bucharest, and the literary magazines *Steaua*, *Iașul Literar*, *Gazeta Literară*, and *Viața Românească* (Romanian life).<sup>14</sup> Later, responses also came from *Secolul 20*, a literary review in Bucharest, the weekly *Cronica*, the Bucharest magazine *Flacăra* (The flame), *Viața Românească*, the publication of the Writers' Union, and the cultural weekly *Tribuna*. The latter asked the International Book Fellowship for “some information on your organization, highly appreciated in our country,” and said that they were interested in writing an article “on the aim of your

<sup>9</sup> April [1965] Highlights, dated May 4, 1965, 8.

<sup>10</sup> November [1965] Highlights, dated December 21, 1965, 8.

<sup>11</sup> June [1966] Highlights, dated July 19, 1966, 1.

<sup>12</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1967, dated January 18, 1968, 1.

<sup>13</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1968, dated January 15, 1969, 1.

<sup>14</sup> March [1966] Highlights, dated April 11, 1966, 10.

organization.”<sup>15</sup> Even well placed and privileged institutions wrote to various sponsors asking for the books they needed, such as the Institute of Psychology of the Romanian Academy of Sciences, the University of Iași, the Institute of Education in Bacău, and the Institute for Food Research in Bucharest.<sup>16</sup>

Many correspondents mentioned that the books sent to them would be shared with others. Among them were the Fine Arts School of Brașov, the staff of the Institute of Economic Research in Bucharest, the artists of the National Theatre in Bucharest, and the professor who received books on economics and who wrote: “I will circulate these two books among my colleagues and my students.”<sup>17</sup> Requests often arrived from people whose friends or acquaintances had received books, and recipients would suggest the names of others who would also like to receive books.

*The lack of Western books.* Many respondents stressed the lack of Western books and the importance of the book sent to them. A correspondent in Timișoara wrote: “I must stress the fact that your sending of books on Western literature [is] of great help to us [...] because we can fill in gaps in our knowledge that have been left open during the war and afterwards.”<sup>18</sup> The difficulty of buying Western books in Romania was a recurrent theme. A correspondent in Cluj mentioned his inability to read in French the books published by the sponsor, because “they are not sold in our bookstores.” A writer-translator in Bucharest, who wanted to translate the poems of Dylan Thomas, wrote: “I am much annoyed to find out that they are not available in our country.” A mathematics student preparing for his B.S. asked for *Measure Theory* by Irina Holmes and *Probability Theory* by Michel Loeve. He wrote: “I am in extreme need of the two books which are indispensable for my studies [...] Though I have done my best to obtain these books, I have not succeeded. Since I have no other possibility of consulting these two books, I am asking the liberty of asking you to send them to me.”<sup>19</sup> A translator of English, French,

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<sup>15</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1967, dated May 10, 1967, 10.

<sup>16</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1969, dated May 12, 1969, 22.

<sup>17</sup> December [1965] Highlights, dated January 13, 1966, 11.

<sup>18</sup> February [1966] Highlights, dated March 9, 1966, 10.

<sup>19</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1967, dated May 10, 1967, 10.

and German asked to be put on a sponsor's mailing list: "I am in desperate and permanent need of English books, never available in our shops."<sup>20</sup>

*The use of gift lists.* The sending of gift order forms, which was begun in January 1965, proved to be quite successful. The initial form was sent to 100 addresses, and by March of that year, 60 responses had been received. Two other gift order forms were mailed in March 1967, one offering a selection of books on literature, history, politics, and science, the other offering books dealing with the theatre. PSPD enclosed a short note asking the recipient to encourage their friends or pupils to write if they also wished to receive books. The response was excellent, and 456 new names were added in this way to the Romanian mailing lists.<sup>21</sup>

A list of titles sent from London by Direct Book Service elicited over 400 letters of requests from students, teachers, and literary critics. The requests were mainly for literary books and textbooks.<sup>22</sup> As a new project, Die Österreichische Gesellschaft für Literatur (The Austrian Society for Literature) sent two gift lists to writers, literary editors, and journalists.

*American and English literature.* Throughout the years, books on literature and language were those most requested by Romanians, who kept stressing the need for works on Western literature and the English language. In February 1966, for example, almost half of the books requested (541 out of 1,019) were books on language and literature, in particular American and English literature. In May 1966, more than half of the books requested (396 out of 727) were on language and literature, many of them responses to an offer. Of the 2,517 books requested in May and June 1967, 1,132 were in the category language and literature.

The works of Huxley, Faulkner, Hemingway, Somerset Maugham, and Tennessee Williams were in particular demand. A literary critic requested John Osborne's plays, previously little known in Romania.

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<sup>20</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1969, dated May 12, 1969, 21.

<sup>21</sup> Highlights Report July–August 1967, dated September 10, 1967, 10.

<sup>22</sup> Romanian Bi-Monthly Report November–December 1973, 3. Courtesy of Ioana Alimanestianu.

Many respondents stressed that they would share their books with others, while some offered to send books in exchange, and, for the first time, a few expressed the desire to pay when foreign currency would become available. A literary critic wrote to a sponsor: "The idea of sending some of the books printed by your publishing house to the Romanian literary critics including myself represents a direct contribution to a better knowledge of your literature and the strengthening of cultural relations between our two countries [...] I shall endeavor to acquaint the Romanian readers with all these literary works and eventually send you the respective reviews published in our literary press."<sup>23</sup>

An unusual request came from a professor who explained that he was writing a book on Benjamin Franklin's life and work for Editura Științifică, a Bucharest publishing house. "In the libraries of the Academy," he wrote, "there is material in other foreign languages which I have used to edit a large part of my work. But for the chapter 'The Figure of Benjamin Franklin as reflected in universal fine arts,' I have found nothing in the books printed in Europe. Perhaps there are such books in America [...] I would like to ask you, if it is possible, to send me some reproductions, possibly in color, of paintings, prints, or sculptures, which show portraits or scenes from the life of Benjamin Franklin. If you can send me a book on any sphere of activity of the great American Statesman and scholar, I shall be very grateful."<sup>24</sup> The literary critic of *Viața Românească* wrote: "Owing to the fact that I am just preparing a book on American civilization, your offer is more than welcome. Lack of books on Anglo-Saxon literature is acute, classics as well as contemporary writers are scarcely available." He asked for twelve titles selected from a list of American authors.<sup>25</sup>

A Romanian writer and art critic wrote to two sponsors saying that he had long been interested in English and American literature, had translated books by Shaw, O'Neill, and Lawrence, and had received a Ph.D. from the University of Southern California. He wrote that James Joyce had been a good friend of the Romanian sculptor Constantin Brancusi, and that he had written a long book about the life and work of the latter. He now wanted to write an essay about Joyce, but first he

<sup>23</sup> July [1964] Highlights, dated August 10, 1964, 5.

<sup>24</sup> December [1964] Highlights, dated January 11, 1965, 8.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

wished to give a public lecture about Joyce and Brâncuși.<sup>26</sup> A translator asked for a catalogue, explaining that he was interested in translating contemporary American and English plays, and that he had already “translated several plays which are just meeting here, in Romania, with great success (such as *Two for the Seesaw* by William Gibson).”<sup>27</sup>

Often, these letters emphasized the unavailability of Western books. An engineer who received a book on American literature wrote: “The book and the other series is a veritable wonder [...] To obtain the same series in our country is an impossibility today.” An architect requesting a book on modern painting said: “Unfortunately, we [do not] have any practical way to get these books.”<sup>28</sup> The Central University Library in Bucharest, the Cluj branch of the Romanian Academy, the World Literature publishing house in Bucharest, the director of the Geology Institute of Bucharest, the Central University Library in Iași, and the Bucharest magazine *Flacăra* all acknowledged books on America.<sup>29</sup> An English teacher in Brașov asked for any book dealing with American literature, anything “that could be of any help in my profession and would enable me to popularize your rich literature, art, and culture which, I am sorry to tell, is not yet too much known in our country.”<sup>30</sup> The University of Timișoara thanked for William Van O’Connor’s *Seven Modern American Novelists* and wrote: “Your courtesy in helping the library acquire this valuable book is deeply appreciated. I am sure it will be read with great interest and will be useful for the teachers and students of the English Department of our philological faculty.”<sup>31</sup> A letter from the head of the English Department at the University of Cluj said: “The students and staff are overwhelmed by the opportunities opened to them through your service. Thanks to you we are now able to offer sufficient amounts of literature in the original, [making the] use of translations and often inadequate excerpts unnecessary.”<sup>32</sup>

<sup>26</sup> April [1965] Highlights, dated May 4, 1965, 9.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> September [1965] Highlights, dated October 8, 1965, 7.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> April [1966] Highlights, dated May 11, 1966, 10. 100 copies of *American Literary Masters Vol. II* edited by C. Anderson were mailed, and more than 50 acknowledgements were received. Ibid., 9.

<sup>31</sup> October [1965] Highlights, dated November 8, 1965, 10.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.



An editor of *Viața Românească* thanked for *The Modern Novel in America* by Frederick Hoffman, and wrote: "It is of great help to us because we are just publishing a note about [the] contemporary novel in America [...] We will be very thankful if you can manage to send us four instead of two of the books described from the list put on the cover, all four about German and world existentialism. This is because we are preparing a special issue [about] existentialism, and English translations of the works of Heidegger and Jaspers are well praised [...] If there is a possibility of sending us too the translation of Karl Jasper's *Nietzsche* [...] that will be wonderful. After review we will send you two tear sheets of our issue."<sup>33</sup> The mailing of 100 copies of *Anthologie de la poésie américaine* (Anthology of American poetry) by Alain Bousquet brought in 84 acknowledgements. An architect who received C. McLaughlin Greene's *The Rise of Urban America* wrote: "Sure it will help to make such English books better known in our country. I have shown it to my colleagues from our Institute of Architecture and it made a very good impression." An intellectual who received *History of the United States* commented: "This worthy gift represents the best opportunity to deepen my knowledge of the history of the States."<sup>34</sup>

A student at the A. I. Cuza University in Iași asked for books by and on J. D. Salinger for a paper he had to write, and an English teacher in Brașov, who received Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye* and a book on Salinger, hoped to publish an essay on Salinger in Brașov's literary paper in order "to get our public acquainted with some literary aspects of today's America."<sup>35</sup> A teacher in Arad asked for the two volumes of Sculley Bradley's *The American Tradition in Literature* and explained that private persons were not allowed to send any currency abroad. "Books must be ordered and may only be ordered by central import agencies within the limits of the currency available for such purposes. All these companies (3) are wholesale firms and are allowed to order books from abroad in large quantity only. The result is that even leading university professors must purchase their books through their private relations or acquaintances. Private persons are not served

<sup>33</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1967, dated March 17, 1967, 10.

<sup>34</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1967, dated May 10, 1967, 11.

<sup>35</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1967, dated January 15, 1969, 13.

by those wholesale companies. Unfortunately I have no acquaintances in America who would be able to do me this favor.”<sup>36</sup>

A student wrote: “I am extremely interested in American literature because at the university we mainly deal with [the] literature of Great Britain, but I am afraid that my knowledge in this respect is rather imperfect. Therefore I would be extremely pleased if you [could] send me some novels or short stories by the best-known American writers.”<sup>37</sup> A student of law in Cluj who received *History of England* wrote: “Your disinterested way of helping people and making them [happy] without asking anything in exchange proves much more about real generosity than all the words in the world.”<sup>38</sup> Books on America that were warmly received included *The Rise of Urban America* by C. McLaughlin Green, *The Modern Novel in America* by J. F. Hoffman, and *History of American Technology* by J. Oliver. A correspondent in Bucharest who received *Great American Short Stories* wrote: “Being initiated in your literature by the interesting books you send me, I like your country and your people more and more, the first for its grandeur and the second for its generosity and courage.”<sup>39</sup>

A student in Timișoara who received *Explorers of the Mississippi* by Timothy Severin wrote: “You don’t know how wonderful it is to get such a book. First of all it’s a great help to enlarge my English knowledge and then it’s a pleasure to read about America, about things we shall never see and which must be just wonderful. Here in Romania we know so little about your continent, about life in your states and even about [your] nature. In our country we can’t find books in English and those in Romanian are not just like yours. We don’t know your people, their life, their traditions [...]”<sup>40</sup> Not only students and teachers, but also doctors, engineers, and intellectuals of all types were interested in books on language and literature. A professor wrote: “I am lecturing in

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<sup>36</sup> Highlights Report October 1969, dated November 7, 1969, 17–18.

<sup>37</sup> Romanian Bi-Monthly Report for March–April 1974, 5. Courtesy of Ioana Alimanestianu.

<sup>38</sup> Romanian Bi-Monthly Report for March–April 1971, 1. Courtesy of Ioana Alimanestianu.

<sup>39</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1967, dated March 17, 1967, 10.

<sup>40</sup> Romanian Bi-Monthly Report October–December 1974, 3. Courtesy of Ioana Alimanestianu.

contemporary British literature and badly need background studies as well as criticisms on individual authors.”<sup>41</sup>

In 1967, IBF, who for a long time received and fulfilled book requests from Czechoslovakia, expanded its contacts with Romania and received an increasing number of requests for books on the English language and literature.<sup>42</sup> A teacher of English reported: “Of course your books are to be circulated among quite a large number of pupils and friends eager to learn about the treasures of American literature and to master your beautiful language.”<sup>43</sup> The University Library of Timișoara received Churchill’s *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples, Vols. I–IV*, and wrote: “Such a valuable historical contribution will be very useful to the teachers and students of the English Department of the University. Thanking you very much for this wonderful present.”<sup>44</sup> The director of the Central Library of the Defense Ministry, a colonel, acknowledged the receipt of *A History of the American Revolution* by John R. Alden, and wrote to the International Book Service: “We are sincerely grateful [...] Also we will be delighted to receive from your part the catalogues, plans for books in print, and other notices informing about your activity.”<sup>45</sup>

*French language and literature.* Interest in French literature, language, and culture was widespread among Romanian intellectuals. The mailing of books on these topics increased and created a new surge in interest in French books and in works by Malraux, Saint-Simon, Sartre, Proust, Mauriac, Apollinaire, and Romain Rolland. The demand for French books continued to grow steadily throughout the years. Recipients greeted with enthusiasm a gift list from the Librairie du XXème Siècle, and hailed the renewal of Franco-Romanian cul-

<sup>41</sup> February [1966] Highlights, dated March 9, 1966, 10. Many letters of acknowledgement were received for *Illustrated English Social History* by George Macaulay Trevelyan. March [1966] Highlights, dated April 11, 1966, 11.

<sup>42</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1967, dated May 10, 1967, 11.

<sup>43</sup> Romanian Bi-Monthly Report for September–October 1971, 4. Courtesy of Ioana Alimanestianu.

<sup>44</sup> Highlights Report July–August 1967, dated September 10, 1967, 9.

<sup>45</sup> Romanian Bi-Monthly Report for March–April 1974, 2. Courtesy of Ioana Alimanestianu.

tural ties. 100 lists were mailed in November 1963, and by February 1964 had elicited some 60 responses. The *Petit Larousse* encyclopedia was in great demand, especially there where editions dating as far back as 1916 were still being used.<sup>46</sup> An engineer who asked for the new edition of *Nouveau Petit Larousse* recalled that he had bought the same dictionary in 1939 when he was 13 years old, and the book had “remained a faithful companion which helped me greatly in perfecting my knowledge of the French language.”<sup>47</sup> A correspondent in Sibiu wrote: “You probably cannot imagine how eager Romanian readers are to know more about French literature and, in general, about French culture after World War II. We hope that after the new Franco-Romanian agreement French books will be found even in the bookstores of our provincial towns. Till then, we are reduced to call on the generosity of our acquaintances in France, such as you.”<sup>48</sup> A Bucharest professor wrote: “Here in Bucharest a real event occurred a few days ago. Several hundred French books arrived, many of them *Larousse* [dictionaries]. In a day or two, all the French books had been sold with astonishing speed. There was a real assault by the intellectuals of Bucharest to obtain these French books. When I heard about this, it was too late, for everything had already disappeared as if by magic. The hunger of Romanians for French books and culture is inexhaustible.”<sup>49</sup>

In 1968, the stream of requests for *Le Petit Larousse Illustré* triggered by the French book exhibition and the belief that the French government would send it free of charge to any Romanian asking for it became a torrent. Letters were arriving by the hundreds, some of them apologetic or making offers of exchange. Practically every request for the dictionary was filled.<sup>50</sup> Requests for French dictionaries continued to arrive in France. In December 1968 alone, Larousse received 1,150 such requests, not counting those handled by other sponsors. Even a woman in the foreign affairs division of the Bucharest Patriarchate requested a *Petit Larousse* dictionary. A teacher in Timișoara who

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<sup>46</sup> January [1964] Highlights, dated February 7, 1964, 1.

<sup>47</sup> September [1964] Highlights, dated October 15, 1964, 5.

<sup>48</sup> January [1965] Highlights, dated February 5, 1965, 7.

<sup>49</sup> May [1965] Highlights, dated June 8, 1965, 7.

<sup>50</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1968, dated November 11, 1968, 20.

asked for a French dictionary wrote that “it is very rare and very difficult to find one here to be paid for in lei.”<sup>51</sup> Many requests for the *Petit Larousse illustré* continued to reach France because of a pervasive belief that Larousse had a quota for donations of its dictionary to foreign countries. A French teacher in Braşov, who received the *Nouveau Larousse élémentaire*, wrote back in French: “When the package was handed over to me in the post office, I could not hold back my tears of joy. I thank you most heartily for your kindness [...] as I do not have the possibility to express my gratitude, I will continue to give free of charge French [language] lessons to one of my four students in order to propagate in a modest measure your beautiful language.”<sup>52</sup> A French teacher at a Sibiu High School, who thanked for five issues of *Documentation française*, wrote that his students had set up a French language circle called “La voix de l’amitié” (“The Voice of Friendship”) for a future library, and that these books were their first books in French about France and its people. The circle counted 60 “fervent admirers” of France in the school, and thus was a prime mailing target.<sup>53</sup>

Galerie Lambert in Paris was very successful with offers of books on French literature and art, and in June 1966, they received 360 responses from individuals and organizations in Romania. In the first two months of 1967, the Galerie received 741 letters from a wide range of people—writers, editors, doctors, psychologists, artists, professors, and others. Many of the letters expressed a warm appreciation for the books sent or offered. A doctor in Bucharest, who received *La formation professionnelle et l’école* (Professional formation and the school) by Pierre Naville, wrote: “We received the book with great pleasure. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts [...] It is very useful for us to know the modern developments of French culture for which we have a great esteem.” He asked for Albert Camus’s *Le mythe de Sisyphe* (*The Myth of Sisyphus*) and for books by Jean-Paul Sartre and Miguel de Unamuno.<sup>54</sup> *Le mythe de Sisyphe*, which was offered with the mailing of the book *Essais sur les modernes* (Essays on the Moderns) by Michel

<sup>51</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1968, dated January 15, 1969, 20.

<sup>52</sup> Highlights Report October 1968, dated November 7, 1969, 18.

<sup>53</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1969, dated May 12, 1969, 21.

<sup>54</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1967, dated March 17, 1967, 9.

Butor, was dispatched in 100 copies, and proved very successful, eliciting 97 acknowledgements of receipt and requests from writers, critics, and editors of some of the leading magazines in Romania—*Gazeta Literară*, *Iașul Literar*, and *Útunk*, the Hungarian magazine published in Cluj.<sup>55</sup> The *Dictionnaire de la littérature contemporaine* (Dictionary of contemporary literature) by R. M. Alberes was particularly successful, with 36 of the 50 copies sent acknowledged. 100 copies of Pierre and Henri Simon's two-volume *Littérature française* (French literature) were mailed and 60 acknowledged, with a request for the offered book *La critique littéraire* (Literary criticism) by Pierre Moreau.<sup>56</sup>

A French teacher in Timișoara wrote that books on twentieth-century literature were not yet being sold in Romania, and that for his classes he needed books on Camus, Proust, Claudel, Saint-Exupéry, Sartre, Valéry, Giraudoux, Martin-du-Gard, Ionesco, Eluard, and Aragon.<sup>57</sup> A professor in Oltenița, a small town on the Danube, wrote: "In our bookshops, French books are very, very expensive. For example the price is often quadrupled."<sup>58</sup> Years later, a teacher of French in Baia Mare confirmed the continuing lack of foreign books in libraries and bookstores in provincial towns: "When I arrived in Baia Mare I was struck by the disappointing shortage of French books in the municipal library. As for bookstores, it is only very seldom that a French title can be seen in them. In my situation, I absolutely need your help."<sup>59</sup>

Letters from several publishing houses arrived expressing interest in French books, and, in some cases, a desire to translate them into Romanian. The director of Editura Tehnica wrote to a French publisher asking for information on their publishing activities. The editor-in-chief of the educational publishing house Editura Didactica si Pedagogica wrote to Bordas, a Paris sponsor, and, through their Romanian intermediary Cartimex, ordered books from the 1968 cat-

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1967, dated January 18, 1968, 12.

<sup>57</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1969, dated July 11, 1969, 19.

<sup>58</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1968, dated July 22, 1968, 16.

<sup>59</sup> Romanian Report July–September 1974, 2. Courtesy of Ioana Alimanestianu.

alogue. The same publishing house wrote to Presses Universitaires de France: "On the last page of the book [we received], we noticed a series of titles on education which interest us very much and we wonder whether any of them might be suitable for translation into Romanian." Editura Politica wrote to the same French publisher and asked for *Anthropologie politique* (Political anthropology) by Georges Balandier for a possible translation and review in their periodicals. Editura Meridiane asked the same publisher for a catalogue to help choose books for translation.<sup>60</sup>

A professor at the University of Bucharest wrote: "Our research on the evolution and contacts of romance languages and literatures needs an even richer documentation. Romanian philology has a long tradition of cooperation with the other Latin countries [...] I would therefore like to have new books on the present state of the French language and literature."<sup>61</sup> An assistant professor in the French Department of the University of Iași said: "The situation is the same as it was some years ago. French books are non-existent in the libraries. The libraries are rather poor. And when one is a teacher, one needs certain books—'tools' like manuals, dictionaries, etc. Unfortunately, as you know, one cannot order books from here."<sup>62</sup> The Bucharest publishing house Editura Politica asked Editions du Seuil in Paris for nine titles. *Cronica* in Cluj wrote to Galerie Lambert in Paris asking for books and catalogues, including works by André Malraux and Günther Grass.<sup>63</sup> The French Embassy in Bucharest forwarded to Editions du Seuil a general request for books from the long-closed Institut Français de Bucharest, which was due to reopen as the French Library. French titles requested in December 1968 included works by Raymond Aron and Daniel-Rops, as well as *De Gaulle* by Jean Lacouture.<sup>64</sup>

*German literature.* In February 1965, PSPD's new sponsor in Vienna, the Österreichische Gesellschaft für Literatur, achieved good results in its Romanian program, receiving requests for 150 books from 21 indi-

<sup>60</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1968, dated March 14, 1968, 17.

<sup>61</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1968, dated May 16, 1968, 14.

<sup>62</sup> Highlights Report July–August 1969, dated September 16, 1969, 21.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>64</sup> Highlights Report December 1969, dated January 7, 1970, 19.



viduals, mainly writers and journalists, many of them new to the book program. The requests were chiefly for books on German literature and German literary magazines.<sup>65</sup> A high school teacher of German, living by the Prut River near the Russian border, wrote: "Names of writers and books we do know. But it depends on you to come to our rescue [and provide the books]. That's the beggar's way."<sup>66</sup> A professor in Cluj who received Thomas Mann's *Erzählungen* (Stories) wrote: "It is very difficult for us German language teachers to find the necessary books to enlarge our knowledge in German language and literature. The publications you send are very useful not only for me but also for my colleagues."<sup>67</sup> A correspondent in Cluj who received a history of German literature wrote: "Perhaps you sent this book as a friendly gesture, but to me it meant much more [...] I will read your book, but I will also lend it to my friends and colleagues because I would not feel right keeping to myself. When I see the other titles on the book jacket, I am not envious but sad. Why can't I buy such books in our bookstores?"<sup>68</sup>

An elementary school teacher of German in Timișoara wrote: "In my work, I lack good visual material in German, especially new materials for the young." After recalling that prior to the Second World War, the school had a fine library that contained the excellent Knaurs Lexikon, she added: "In every publishing house there are books which are misprinted or improperly bound."<sup>69</sup> A teacher in Sibiu wrote in German: "The selection of German books in our bookshops is very sparse, so I have no other possibility but to turn to you."<sup>70</sup> A letter by a German teacher who received the book *Alle Wunder dieser Welt* (All the wonders of this world) by Roland Gööck indicated the great impact of such books in the German schools in Romania. He wrote in German:

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<sup>65</sup> February [1965] Highlights, dated March 5, 1965, 7.

<sup>66</sup> May [1966] Highlights, dated June 13, 1966, 10.

<sup>67</sup> Highlights Report July–August 1967, dated September 10, 1967, 9. The receipt of all 20 copies of *Englische Literaturgeschichte* [English Literary History] was acknowledged. Highlights Report November–December 1967, dated January 18, 1968, 12.

<sup>68</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1968, dated May 16, 1968, 13.

<sup>69</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1968, dated July 22, 1968, 16.

<sup>70</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1969, dated May 12, 1969, 22.



“You sent me a wonderful book [...] I already showed it to many of my students and they were all amazed by it.”<sup>71</sup>

*Italian books.* For the first time, requests for the Italian magazine *Tempo Presente* were received from twelve individuals.<sup>72</sup> A PSPD sponsor in Italy who had been mailing books to Romanian libraries and publications attempted to expand its contacts with individual Romanians by sending out a letter offering a choice of books from a list of Italian titles.<sup>73</sup> The Library of the Romanian Academy wrote to Esperienze Internazionali in Rome requesting 15 titles, ranging from *Il concilio Vaticano II* (Vatican council II) to Arnaldo Forlani's *Il P.S.I. di fronte al comunismo del 1945 al 1956* (The PSI from front to Communism from 1945 to 1956). The *Revue roumaine des sciences sociales* (The Romanian review of social sciences) in Bucharest requested 32 titles in Italian.<sup>74</sup>

*Language and textbooks.* Many Romanians, especially students, were eager to learn or to improve their English and French language skills, and there was a strong interest in books about teaching English and French and in teaching aids and textbooks. Foreign language dictionaries in English, French, and German were in great demand by teachers. By the mid-1960s, the majority of the requests were for books on the English language as well as on American and English literature. The Central Library in Bucharest asked for 19 books on educational methods, particularly methods of teaching English, as well as for books on the English language.<sup>75</sup> The director of the Central University Library in Bucharest acknowledged Steinberg's *A New Dictionary of British History* and wrote: “We assure you that we will make it circulate amongst our specialists in English language and English history.”<sup>76</sup> Many letters of thanks were received for English language books, espe-

<sup>71</sup> Romanian Bi-Monthly Report November–December 1974, 2. Courtesy of Ioana Alimanestianu.

<sup>72</sup> January [1965] Highlights, dated February 5, 1965, 8.

<sup>73</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1967, dated November 10, 1967, 12.

<sup>74</sup> Highlights Report July–August 1969, dated September 16, 1969, 19. PSI stands for Italian Socialist Party.

<sup>75</sup> June [1964] Highlights, dated July 17, 1964, 3.

<sup>76</sup> July [1964] Highlights, dated August 10, 1964, 5.

cially for Webster's *New World Dictionary of the American Language*. A Bucharest librarian wrote: "If you have the possibility to increase the number of the owners of the Webster here in Romania, I should recommend \_\_\_\_\_, who is lecturer of English and a translator."<sup>77</sup>

The Ion Mincu Institute of Architecture acknowledged two English language books and asked for others, explaining: "This choice was made after consulting our English teachers who have been very much interested both in the books received and in the catalogue which is so tempting that the final decision was not an easy one [...] I can only express our gratitude for the generosity shown by your organization, which, let me assure you, will not be lost."<sup>78</sup> A letter from Bucharest read: "The few courses in English available in Romania are all over 30 years old, and the only manual published in Romania recently is for students who wish to learn English without a teacher and is therefore not suited for collective courses. You can see how very welcome your book [*Learning American English*] has been."<sup>79</sup> The director of the Central University Library in Bucharest wrote: "Our specialists are very keenly interested in the theory and practice of teaching English and therefore your gift book [*Principles of Language Study* by H. E. Palmer] is welcomed by all of them."<sup>80</sup>

The recipient of a dictionary wrote: "I cannot thank you [enough] for your Webster. It was unexpected and cheering. At first I was scared because I received it at my institute so that inevitably certain more or less undesirable persons saw this present. How can I repay your kindness?"<sup>81</sup> A student wrote: "We are a group of fellow students in the same field, so that one or two of the dictionaries I shall keep for myself and the others I shall give to my fellows. In fact we shall use them collectively."<sup>82</sup> Teachers who received a gift book order form offering a choice of three books from a list of twelve titles, most of them language

<sup>77</sup> February [1965] Highlights, dated March 5, 1965, 8. The name given by the correspondent was probably deleted by Minden himself to protect this person's identity.

<sup>78</sup> July [1964] Highlights, dated August 10, 1964, 5.

<sup>79</sup> May [1966] Highlights, dated June 13, 1966, 9.

<sup>80</sup> July [1964] Highlights, dated August 10, 1964, 6.

<sup>81</sup> March [1965] Highlights, dated April 5, 1965, 8.

<sup>82</sup> May [1966] Highlights, dated June 13, 1966, 10.

textbooks, wrote to ask if they could have the entire list. A high school principal in Constanța wrote: "Maybe you would be kind enough to send us more, even the whole amount of the books, if possible, as our school library is in need of pedagogical and methodic [sic] books in teaching English as a foreign language."<sup>83</sup> A teacher in Satu Mare, Northern Transylvania, wrote: "I am in a rather great dilemma—not knowing what to choose. Surely I should like to receive more books, not only three of the listed books. But I don't know if this would be possible at all? You see we must teach English here, but we have not enough books for it [...] That's why it is a rather great task for us. I should like to have all of them. Yes, because we need all of them very much."<sup>84</sup> Teachers also appeared to be learning English for their own self-improvement. A teacher of mathematics in Bucharest wrote: "I want to learn English seriously both for my job [...] and for myself, for I like to read good literature each evening." She gave the names of two other teachers who also wanted to receive books. Another teacher, from the small town of Breaza, wrote that she was interested in improving her English language skills: "I am a teacher and consequently I am interested in enlarging my horizons." She also gave the names of friends who wished to receive books.<sup>85</sup>

A Bucharest teacher wrote: "During the last few years, the English language has taken a great development in our country and very wide circles of both young people and professionals in different fields have begun to study English. Alongside the classical methods applied in our schools and universities, there is a manifest need for a more practical and yet scientific method of teaching to meet the requirements of students of English." She said she had found E. F. Candlin's *Present Day English for Foreign Students* extremely useful and asked if she could have sixteen copies of it.<sup>86</sup> A student majoring in languages at Iași University wrote: "I am a student of literature and I need books to prepare my final thesis. The situation is embarrassing but these books are not to be found in Romania."<sup>87</sup> A 14-year-old, who wanted to learn foreign

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<sup>83</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1967, dated March 17, 1967, 10.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1967, dated July 18, 1967, 11.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 12.

languages and especially English, asked for C. E. Eckersley's *Essential English* because "in our country, we can get these books in the libraries only occasionally and [it is] very difficult."<sup>88</sup> A professor of English in Bucharest gratefully acknowledged a book on English prose, and wrote: "English books are so rare in Romania that the only volume to be found in the bookshops now is Eckersley's *Course in English* [...]; not very valuable as a contact with English literature for a teacher of English literature."<sup>89</sup>

A professor of English in Bucharest wrote: "Here in Romania nearly all books in the English language are sent over from Russia with Russian remarks and 'adapted.' I should badly like to possess English books with original text with English remarks and not adapted, or without remarks, and you would oblige me to give me a help [sic]."<sup>90</sup> A London sponsor reported a great demand for English textbooks, with almost 100 requests received in October 1967, many of them from people who were writing for the first time. During the same period, many "first time" requests were also received by Galerie Lambert in Paris, the majority coming from provincial towns such as Arad, Buhuși (Bacău County), Suceava, and Botoșani.<sup>91</sup> A man who was compiling a dictionary of English and American idiomatic expressions for Romanians thanked for William Freeman's *Concise Dictionary of English Slang*, writing: "I am in great need of English works of reference. In my country there is absolutely no possibility for a particular individual to order books from abroad [...] I should very much like you to know that five minutes after the postman handed me the book you had the most exquisite kindness to send me, I began to extract phrases from it. The amount of your assistance in my work is hard to be appreciated. It is beyond computation."<sup>92</sup>

During the first two months of 1968, a new gift book offer was sent to the English Departments of Romanian high schools at the rate of 25 offers a week. The recipient was asked to select two titles from

<sup>88</sup> November [1965] Highlights, dated December 21, 1965, 8.

<sup>89</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1967, dated January 18, 1968, 14.

<sup>90</sup> April [1966] Highlights, dated May 11, 1966, 10.

<sup>91</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1967, dated November 10, 1967, 12.

<sup>92</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1968, dated March 14, 1968, 15.

three lists of books, mainly language textbooks and simplified versions of classic American novels. 117 replies were received and still more were coming in. One of the two high schools in Suceava in Moldavia returned 24 letters from two teachers, students, and the school's doctor.<sup>93</sup> A gift book offer from a list of English language textbooks elicited an average of 45 requests a week, most of them from teachers and students. Interpress in London reported receiving an average of 40 requests a week from students and teachers, mainly for books on literature, language, and art.<sup>94</sup> The same offer of language books sent out from London was circulated from the U.S. to all Romanian high schools and their English Departments. Responses came in at the rate of 200 a month, many from the same towns. The pattern seemed to be that when a teacher found out about the offer, he or she circulated the list among their students, who then indicated what books they wanted. A girl from Arad wrote: "I study English in school but till now I haven't got a real English book or a few easy short stories. Could you help me?"<sup>95</sup> A teacher of English in Pucioasa, Dâmbovița County, who asked for English textbooks, wrote: "Until recent years French culture had an outstanding influence. Now in our country English is more widely taught. My pupils are eager to know more about English history, literature, art, etc."<sup>96</sup>

A self-taught student wrote in very good English to thank for the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*: "I shall be able to read all my English books I am interested in and all this thanks to you. This dictionary will also help me to improve my English knowledge in the way of vocabulary and idioms and will enable me to tackle the so rich and valuable old English literature and in the first place the great Shakespeare."<sup>97</sup> A student requested English books because "I am thinking more and more that I should become an English teacher [...] One of my friends brought me your address. He told me everything about you and that you are very generous. He said that I shall receive at least three books

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1968, dated May 16, 1968, 14.

<sup>95</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1968, dated November 11, 1968, 21.

<sup>96</sup> Highlights Report July–August 1969, dated September 16, 1969, 21.

<sup>97</sup> Undated Romanian Bi-Monthly Report March–April 1971, 1. Courtesy of Ioana Alimanestianu.

[...].”<sup>98</sup> Requests were received for books on educational psychology and on modern teaching methods from the Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, a publishing house for textbooks, the Central Pedagogical Library in Bucharest, and the director of the Pedagogical Institute in Galați.<sup>99</sup> An English major at the University of Cluj wrote: “Here in our country we find only very few grammar books, and our teachers recommend us some fine American grammars. But I have no friend in America. That’s why I ask you—if it is possible, please send me any of the following books [...] You see this is a problem of ‘to be or not to be’ for me.”<sup>100</sup> An informal group of students of English at the People’s University of Arad asked for study materials, and wrote: “We are a group of people of all ages and professions, gathered under the same purpose: to study English and to inform ourselves more and more about your people and culture.”<sup>101</sup>

Exchange programs functioned well, and new programs received favorable responses from Romanian institutions. In May 1964, new offers of exchange were received from the director of the Art Museum of the Romanian People’s Republic and the Central Library of the Babeș-Bolyai University in Cluj, both of which had received books sent through PSPD. A number of offers to exchange books, mainly from libraries but also from a few individuals, arrived in December 1964.<sup>102</sup> In 1965, offers of exchange were received from a Music Conservatory in Cluj, the Institute of Linguistics in Bucharest, a Bucharest painter, and a correspondent who offered Romanian postage stamps in exchange for *Plaisir de France*, a French publication on interior decoration. Christmas greetings arrived from the Central State Library in Bucharest, the World literature Publishing House, the magazine *Viața*

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<sup>98</sup> Undated Romanian Bi-monthly Report October–December 1974, 3. Courtesy of Ioana Alimanestianu.

<sup>99</sup> December [1965] Highlights, dated January 13, 1966, 12. The publishing house sent requests for materials on these topics to a sponsor in New York and a sponsor in Paris. Highlights Report November–December 1967, dated January 18, 1968, 14.

<sup>100</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1969, dated May 12, 1969, 21.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>102</sup> May [1964] Highlights, dated June 10, 1964, 7, and December [1964] Highlights, dated January 11, 1965, 8.

*Românească*, and several professors.<sup>103</sup> Esperienze Internazionali in Rome, which began work on PSPD's Romanian program in 1965, received a request from the Central State Library in Bucharest proposing an exchange of books and attaching a list of 122 publications in which it was interested, most of them on theatre, art, music, and literature. *Contemporanul* also asked Esperienze Internazionali to enter into an exchange of books.<sup>104</sup> Books sent in exchange for Western books by Romanian organizations (museums, libraries, institutes) increased in 1966. There were also regular exchange agreements with medical, geographical, literary, and art magazines in Romania.<sup>105</sup> Many offers to exchange books, or offers to send books as a sign of gratitude, were received. The publishing house Editura Meridane offered to exchange books, describing itself as "dealing with the greatest part with translations into foreign languages in the spheres of literature, science, and technique, published in our country or in cooperation with foreign publishing houses."<sup>106</sup>

The Institute of Linguistics in Bucharest wrote to several sponsors—IBC, Harper & Row, New American Library (NAL)—enclosing a list of its publications that it offered on an exchange basis. The *Revue Roumaine des Sciences Sociales* wrote to Esperienze Internazionali, accepting an offer to exchange books.<sup>107</sup> Many of PSPD's sponsors entered into exchange agreements with Romanian institutions, and new offers for such exchanges continued to arrive, for example from the Polytechnic Institute in Braşov (with a French sponsor), and the Linguistics Institute of Bucharest (with a German publisher).<sup>108</sup>

*Religion and philosophy.* The Institute of Theology in Sibiu was first heard from in January 1965. A correspondent who received a book by Teilhard de Chardin and a bibliography of his works wrote: "You made it possible for me to catch a glimpse, although incomplete, of Teilhard de Chardin's thinking. I had heard his name but had never

<sup>103</sup> January [1965] Highlights, dated February 5, 1965, 8.

<sup>104</sup> May [1965] Highlights, dated June 8, 1965, 7.

<sup>105</sup> May [1966] Highlights, dated June 13, 1966, 11.

<sup>106</sup> June [1966] Highlights, dated July 19, 1966, 10.

<sup>107</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1968, dated March 14, 1968, 16.

<sup>108</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1968, dated May 16, 1968, 14.



read anything by him previously. This is why I am twice thankful to you—first for introducing me to a completely new philosophical world, and second for the mailing itself.”<sup>109</sup> The editor of *Luptă de Clasă* (Class struggle), the party’s Central Committee monthly, thanked for *Political Ideologies of the Twentieth Century* by Hans Kohn, and wrote: “I am working at present in the domain of philosophy and sociology of religion, and I lack completely the American literature in this respect. I should be particularly grateful to you if you could help me with some of the most important American titles in this domain.”<sup>110</sup>

*Sociology and social sciences.* There was a small but steady interest in books about the social sciences. The editor of *Korunk* in Cluj, an ideological review in Hungarian, acknowledged the receipt of several books on sociology and requested more.<sup>111</sup> The same review acknowledged *The Penguin Survey of the Social Sciences* and asked for *On Justice in Society* by Morris Ginsberg.<sup>112</sup> The Central University Library in Bucharest received *Les classes sociales* (Social classes) by Georges Gurvitch, and wrote: “This book arrived just in time to be included in an annotated bibliography to be used by the professors and students of our university. We are especially interested in books on sociology and philosophy and we would be very happy to receive the book you offer, *L’intuition de l’instant* (The intuition of the moment) by Gaston Bachelard.”<sup>113</sup> A professor at the Institute of Philosophy of the Romanian Academy, who received P. Salles’s *Initiation économique et sociale* (Economic and social initiation), wrote: “I will recommend this book also to my colleagues for their research work or their teaching of sociology.”<sup>114</sup>

*Economics and management.* There was continued interest in books on economics and management. The Academy Institute for Economic Research asked for a number of titles on economic theory and

<sup>109</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1968, dated March 14, 1968, 14.

<sup>110</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1968, dated July 22, 1968, 16.

<sup>111</sup> January [1964] Highlights, dated February 7, 1964, 2.

<sup>112</sup> May [1966] Highlights, dated June 13, 1966, 11.

<sup>113</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1968, dated March 14, 1968, 15.

<sup>114</sup> Highlights Report December 1969, dated January 7, 1970, 20.



wages.<sup>115</sup> The Metalimport export-import firm and the regime's economic monthly *Probleme Economice* both requested *Histoire des doctrines économiques* (History of economic doctrines) by Charles Gide and Charles Rist, and *Probleme Economice* requested other books on economics.<sup>116</sup> A first and unusual confirmation was received from Professor Manea Mănescu, a well-known professor and economist who was President of the Economic Computer Center of the Institute of Economic Sciences of Bucharest. He effusively praised *Statistical Abstract of the U.S. 1963* and wrote that he hoped to set up "a systematic exchange of publications."<sup>117</sup>

Acknowledgements for books on economics, relatively rare before, increased slowly, and were sent by an agricultural engineer at the Forest Research Institute in Bucharest, the Agricultural Institute Nicolae Bălcescu of Bucharest, and the Bucharest weekly *Contemporanul*, who all received *Economics of the Kennedy Years*.<sup>118</sup> Furthermore, the Chief Counselor of the State Bank and Fructexport, the state company for production and export in Bucharest, also acknowledged books on economics. A former professor of economics at Bucharest University said that "owing to unfortunate circumstances" he had lost his entire library, and he asked for books "printed in the last 20 years [...] in the domain of economic, social, and political sciences."<sup>119</sup> For the first time, the President of the State Committee for Labor and Wages acknowledged *Labor and Management in Industrial Society* by Clark Kerr. Also for the first time, the head engineer of the Ministry of Oil and Chemical Industries acknowledged *Technology and Social Change*. The Institute for Economic Research asked for *Soviet Economic Aid* by Joseph Berliner. The Lenin Institute of Economic Science in Bucharest thanked for *Planning Prosperity* by Ronald Brech.<sup>120</sup> Letters regarding books on economics registered

<sup>115</sup> December [1963] Highlights, dated January 10, 1964, 1–2.

<sup>116</sup> February [1964] Highlights, dated March 6, 1964, 2.

<sup>117</sup> July [1964] Highlights, dated August 10, 1964, 6. Manea Mănescu (1916–2009) was also a member of the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers Party, a member of the Romanian Academy of Sciences, a former finance minister (1955–57), and later prime minister (1974–79).

<sup>118</sup> February [1965] Highlights, dated March 5, 1965, 6.

<sup>119</sup> April [1965] Highlights, dated May 4, 1965, 9.

<sup>120</sup> September [1965] Highlights, dated October 8, 1965, 7.

a small increase in May 1966. Everyman's *Dictionary of Economics*, mailed in 45 copies, elicited 20 acknowledgements, including from organizations (Romanoexport, the state enterprise for foreign trade) and several economists. An economist wrote: "I hope you will comprehend my need for knowledge, which sometimes is as exacting [as] hunger."<sup>121</sup>

Letters arrived from leading economic magazines such as *Probleme Economice*: "We are interested in more American economic literature, including recent writings or new editions of well-known texts." Letters also came in from organizations, such as the Romanian Ministry of Finance, the Chamber of Commerce, and the State Enterprise for Foreign Trade.<sup>122</sup> *Probleme Economice* and the Masinimport state import enterprise asked for books on the European Community and the newsletter *East-West Trade*. The chief of the Foreign Relations Department of the Romanian Chamber of Commerce thanked for the newsletter, which "we consider particularly interesting and efficient [...] We assure you that we would welcome receiving it in the future too." The respondent offered to send their publications in exchange.<sup>123</sup> In a long letter, the Centre of Economic Computation and Economic Cybernetics in Bucharest, headed by Professor Manea Mănescu, explained its objectives and publications, and expressed the desire to "know what research is being done in your country. The Centre would enjoy very much corresponding with you and research workers from your country, and to establish a regular exchange of scientific information, printed matters, and reprints."<sup>124</sup> The head of the Center for Improving Enterprise Management cadres in Bucharest, a new institution much influenced by Western management methods that had trained 4,000 management personnel in its first year, thanked for Evelyn Konrad's *Marketing Research* and wrote that a summary of the book and any other future books would be published in their information bulletin. "Thus we hope that [a] great number of Romanian managers will be interested to get these books which may be helpful

<sup>121</sup> May [1966] Highlights, dated June 13, 1966, 11.

<sup>122</sup> October [1965] Highlights, dated November 8, 1965, 9.

<sup>123</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1967, dated May 10, 1967, 12.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 12. On Mănescu, see fn. 117.

to them.”<sup>125</sup> The manager of one of Romania’s largest electrical enterprises, who received four books on management techniques and market research, wrote: “These books caused me a high satisfaction and they opened a new period in my manager career, a new stage that is theoretical substantiation and development of my conceptions concerning management, conceptions based up to the present almost exclusively on personal experience.”<sup>126</sup>

*Science and technology.* One letter, acknowledging the receipt of W. I. B. Beveridge’s *The Art of Scientific Investigation*, explained that the professor to whom the book had been sent had died. Written by three relatives of the deceased, the letter asked that one of them be put on the mailing list in his place, and requested books and periodicals about scientific work in Great Britain.<sup>127</sup> An electronic engineer wrote: “I learned English because the American scientific literature has done so much for modern civilization.”<sup>128</sup> In May 1965, 100 copies of a new gift book order form were mailed, listing books on management and technology, and asking the recipient to select five titles with the understanding that he or she would receive three of these. The first responses soon came in.<sup>129</sup> A professor in Bucharest wrote: “After almost a quarter of a century of silence and the cessation of normal scientific exchanges between our countries and of the possibility of finding in our bookstores the scientific documentation of your country, it is with pleasure that I acknowledge the receipt of *A Dictionary of Social Sciences* [by Julius Gould and William Kolb] for which I thank you most sincerely.”<sup>130</sup> The Center for Industrial Research of the Ministry for the Chemical Industry asked that additional copies of the material sent to them be also dispatched to five of their branch organizations, which they listed.<sup>131</sup>

By 1964, people had become less afraid to write, and more daring in their requests. Many spontaneous requests were received

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<sup>125</sup> March–April [1969] Highlights, dated May 12, 1969, 21.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>127</sup> September [1964] Highlights, dated October 15, 1964, 5.

<sup>128</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1967, dated May 10, 1967, 10.

<sup>129</sup> May [1965] Highlights, dated June 8, 1965, 7.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>131</sup> June [1966] Highlights, dated July 19, 1966, 10.

from a student who “heard” that the New American Library mailed books, from a scientist who “had the opportunity of consulting” the Library’s *Guide to Science Reading*, and from an architect who “found” Frank Lloyd Wright’s *Future of Architecture* “on a colleague’s working table.”<sup>132</sup> In March 1964, nearly two-thirds of the 96 Romanian responses received came from individuals, professors in particular.<sup>133</sup> In June 1964, a larger number of letters than usual was received from persons who had never or rarely written, including the curator of the George Enescu Museum, the Vice President of the Romanian Democratic Women’s Council, who was a member of various international organizations and a distinguished writer of the old regime, and a writer and literary critic and long-time advocate of socialist realism.<sup>134</sup> At the end of the year, there was a slight increase in letters received from institutions, including the Writers’ Union, the Polytechnic Institute in Timisoara, the magazine *Arte Plastice, Neuer Weg* (New path), the German language magazine published in Bucharest, the Writers’ Literary Fund, the Institute of Agronomy in Iași, an art museum in Bucharest, and many others.<sup>135</sup> Requests continued to arrive from a wide variety of people and organizations, located in many different cities, such as the Regional Directorate of Architecture, Construction, and Planning in Pitești, the Institute of Atomic Physics in Cluj, the School of Medicine in Timișoara, the Union of Writers in Brașov, the Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy in Tirgu Mureș, and the National Tourist Office in Bucharest. The type of books requested also showed increasing variety. For the first time, PSPD heard from an unnamed Supreme Court judge.<sup>136</sup>

*Medicine and health.* Romanian doctors were interested in recent medical advances and new views and approaches, as well as in the experiences of Western physicians, which they closely followed. The Ministry of Health and Welfare wrote: “It is always with great satisfac-

<sup>132</sup> February [1964] Highlights, dated March 6, 1964, 2.

<sup>133</sup> March [1964] Highlights, dated April 8, 1964, 4.

<sup>134</sup> June [1964] Highlights, dated July 17, 1964, 2.

<sup>135</sup> December [1964] Highlights, dated January 11, 1965, 8.

<sup>136</sup> September [1964] Highlights, dated October 15, 1964, 5, and January [1965] Highlights, dated February 5, 1965, 8.

tion that we receive your books, so useful for our library frequented by hundreds of doctors wanting up-to-date documentation.”<sup>137</sup> The German medical journal *Münchener Medizinische Zeitschrift* (Munich medical journal) was regularly received, and many addressees were eager to continue receiving it.<sup>138</sup> Several Romanians regretted that technical titles could not be sent to them. A doctor, on being informed that she could not receive medical books for free, wrote: “We would like to study Western medicine and medical progress, not only the Russian [materials] we are given at medical congresses.”<sup>139</sup>

*Psychology.* A psychologist who received Robert Woodworth’s *Contemporary Schools of Psychology* wrote: “I consider it extremely useful for our scientific work. We follow with great interest the publications of American psychologists and will look forward to receiving other books.”<sup>140</sup> A letter from a Bucharest ear, nose, and throat specialist revealed that yoga, one of the socialist states’ minor *bêtes noires*, was still very much alive, at least in Romania. He wrote that he had asked several colleagues and students to translate Jolan Jacobi’s *Psychologie von C. G. Jung* (Psychology of C. G. Jung) for “our circle which is interested in a synthesis of philosophical-medical knowledge (above all yoga) in quest of a fuller human evolution.”<sup>141</sup>

*Art.* Books on art were greeted with great enthusiasm, and books on modern art filled a pressing need for Romanian artists. There was a great interest in abstract art, as “few such exhibitions can be seen in Romania.” Catalogues sent to Romania by Galerie Lambert elicited enthusiastic responses from artists, who requested books for themselves and their colleagues. One artist wrote that he would forward his engravings to the Galerie. The Institute of Architecture Ion Minciu requested books on art in Italy. The Galerie received 18 responses to its postcard asking recipients if they wished to be kept on its catalogue mailing list. Nine of the responses were from Bucharest, the others

<sup>137</sup> March [1964] Highlights, dated April 8, 1964, 4.

<sup>138</sup> April [1964] Highlights, dated May 5, 1964, 3.

<sup>139</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1968, dated November 11, 1968, 20.

<sup>140</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1967, dated March 17, 1967, 10.

<sup>141</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1968, dated January 15, 1969, 22.

from Cluj, Sibiu, and Timișoara.<sup>142</sup> Many letters from artists expressed their keen interest in painting and other arts, especially contemporary art. A Hungarian art teacher in Transylvania asked for recent books on painting and sculpture, and wrote: "I am Hungarian and my employment is the art teacher. In my free time I am active in the art of painting and the plastic arts [...] But my salary is necessary to keep my family, and in this town I cannot obtain books for this purpose. Having not a possibility to obtain such books, I must solicit your help." She asked to have the books sent to a relative living in Hungary, obviously in the hope of avoiding the more severe Romanian censors.<sup>143</sup> A young painter in Bucharest wanted to arrange an exhibition of Romanian painting in Paris with the help of the Galerie Lambert, and suggested that contact be made with the Romanian Union of Fine Arts in Bucharest to explore the possibilities of organizing such an exhibition.<sup>144</sup>

More letters came in from provincial towns, many of them from artists, art schools, and libraries, such as the Library of the Romanian Academy in Cluj, the Școala Media de Arte Plastice (High School of Fine Arts), a professor and the chief librarian at the Ion Andreescu Fine Arts Institute, all in Cluj, the People's School of Art (Școala Populară de Arte) in Brașov, the State Theatre in Timișoara, the Circle of Fine Arts in Galați, the Clinic of Psychiatry of the Institute of Medicine in Târgu Mureș, the Regional Museum of Constanța, the Artists' Union in Sibiu, the rector of the Fine Arts Institute "N. Grigorescu" in Bucharest, and a physician from the small town of Oravița.<sup>145</sup> 120 or almost one-third of the letters received in May were sent to the Galerie Lambert, mostly by artists, art schools, and museums acknowledging or requesting art books and catalogues. One correspondent wrote: "Among my friends are at least six or seven persons who will be delighted to read your magazine [*Jardin des Arts*] which I hope to receive and distribute [to them]."<sup>146</sup> The Art Museum of Bucharest acknowledged a book on Kandinsky and wrote: "The library of our museum is happy to be able to put at the

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<sup>142</sup> December [1963] Highlights, dated January 10, 1964, 2, and May [1964] Highlights, dated June 10, 1964, 7–8.

<sup>143</sup> December [1964] Highlights, dated January 11, 1965, 7.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>145</sup> March [1965] Highlights, dated April 5, 1965, 8.

<sup>146</sup> May [1965] Highlights, dated June 8, 1965, 6.

disposal of its readers the interesting works you send us.”<sup>147</sup> The book *I Maestri del Colore* (Masters of color) sent from Italy was acknowledged by 42 out of 50 addressees. The same series continued to meet with great success with books on Dufy, Giacometti, Mondrian, Modigliani, and Dalí. 161 acknowledgement letters were received, many from well-known artists. Requests also came for the latest achievements in American art, modern painting, and modern design, among others from students of architecture.<sup>148</sup>

A few figures illustrate the extreme popularity of art books among Romanians. 138 books on the arts and architecture were requested in April 1966, second to the 349 requests for books on literature and language. Letters of acknowledgements from artists totaled 112, and from professors and teachers 123. Of the 1,029 books requested from Romania in June 1966, 544 were on art or architecture and 313 on literature and language—in all, 857 books or more than two thirds of all requests. Good responses arrived for the mailing of *Museums USA* by Herbert M. Katz with an offer of *A Guide to Modern Art in Europe*. A professor at the Theological Institute in Sibiu wrote: “These books will be valuable documentary resources for the readers of our library.”<sup>149</sup> A teacher who received *Modern Art in Your Life* by Robert Goldwater wrote that she was grateful for “such books, which help me to be in contact and informed about all that is new in modern art in the U.S. Such books are not only interesting and informative, but also prove to be most useful to me.”<sup>150</sup> *Entretiens sur l’art abstrait* (Discussions on modern art) by Raymond Bayer, sent to 50 Romanian artists, yielded 35 acknowledgements, and 100 copies of *Le musée de l’impressionisme* (The museum of Impressionism) by T. Bourollet and F. Mathey elicited 93 responses. The Brukenthal Museum in Sibiu thanked for Katharine Kuh’s *The Core of Modern Art*, and wrote: “The workers of our museum and the readers of our library will greatly enjoy this inter-

<sup>147</sup> December [1965] Highlights, dated January 13, 1966, 11.

<sup>148</sup> October [1965] Highlights, dated November 8, 1965, 10, and April [1966] Highlights, dated May 11, 1966, 9.

<sup>149</sup> June [1966] Highlights, dated July 19, 1966, 8. Also, many requests for art books came from professors who taught painting and art history and used them for their lectures. *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>150</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1967, dated May 10, 1967, 10.



esting work.” Many requests for art books came from people outside the art world.<sup>151</sup>

*Architecture.* There was great interest in modern architecture, the training of American architects, and any sort of architectural development happening in the U.S. An architect who received *L’architecture moderne* by J. M. Richards said he wanted “to intervene with the authorities to obtain the necessary currency to purchase other publications in your collection.”<sup>152</sup> The mailing of paperbacks on Frank Lloyd Wright, Mies Van der Rohe, and Le Corbusier elicited 18 acknowledgements and requests for additional books.<sup>153</sup> The mailing of 50 copies of *The City* by Eliel Saarinen elicited 31 acknowledgements. Receipt of 27 of the 50 copies of *Urbanisme* by Le Corbusier was acknowledged.<sup>154</sup> Galerie Lambert received two requests for an illustrated book on American architecture by Frank L. Wright and *L’architecture mobile* (Mobile architecture) by Yona Friedman sent from Kishinev in Bessarabia, Moldavian SSR.<sup>155</sup> An architect in Bucharest, who received *The Highway and the City* by Lewis Mumford, wrote: “Lewis Mumford’s exciting work [...] was unknown to me and my friends. We got more information on critics of architecture and perhaps we altered many of our ideas about current developments of architecture. How exciting architecture is when seen through the eyes and intelligence of Lewis Mumford.”<sup>156</sup>

*Theatre and cinema.* For the first time, the editor of the Bucharest magazine *Romania Today* wrote and asked for *Panorama du théâtre américain* (Panorama of American theatre).<sup>157</sup> A Romanian theatre, in the

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<sup>151</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1967, dated July 18, 1967, 12.

<sup>152</sup> July [1964] Highlights, dated August 10, 1964, 5. A number of architects and libraries also thanked for books and magazines on architecture. May [1964] Highlights, dated June 10, 7.

<sup>153</sup> November [1965] Highlights, dated December 21, 1965, 8.

<sup>154</sup> Highlights Report July–August 1967, dated September 10, 1967, 10, and Highlights Report November–December 1967, dated January 18, 1968, 12.

<sup>155</sup> Undated Romanian Bi-Monthly Report September–October 1971, 3. Courtesy of Ioana Alemanestianu.

<sup>156</sup> Undated Romanian Report for May 1974, 8. Courtesy of Ioana Alimanestianu.

<sup>157</sup> November [1965] Highlights, dated December 21, 1965, 8.



midst of staging Eugene O'Neill's *Moon on the Misbegotten*, cabled a New York producer for a copy of the original text. A literary critic, immediately after being named Secretary of the Romanian Artists Association in charge of documentation and information, sent a long list of requests on the American theatre to bring the Association's library up to date.<sup>158</sup> The stage manager of the state theatre in Birlad, who received *The Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts*, mentioned "the delight I had when I took knowledge in this way of unknown aspects of some great artistic achievements of your country [...] I remain deeply grateful for the fact that in this way you were laying by means of culture a bridge over the ocean."<sup>159</sup> Requests for books on American theatre came from the Union of Writers in Bucharest, the library of the Brukenthal Museum in Sibiu, the Lucia Sturdza-Bulandra Theatre in Bucharest, and the literary magazine *Gazeta Literară*.<sup>160</sup> The three volumes of *Théâtre* by Eugène Ionesco were especially in demand, among others by the Library of the Romanian Academy, the State Agency for theatre and dance tours in Bucharest, and *Iaşul Literar*, the publication of the Writers' Union.<sup>161</sup> Works on the cinema were also highly coveted in Romania.

*Music.* An opera singer, who was formerly imprisoned for political reasons, wrote for the first time and asked for books on French music. Other "first-timers" included two musicologists and composers, who acknowledged Pierre Citron's *Bartok*.<sup>162</sup> The director of the Composers' Union in Bucharest, the director of the Bucharest Opera House, and the director of the Bucharest Philharmonic Orchestra all acknowledged the receipt of *Music in Britain*.<sup>163</sup>

*International affairs and politics.* Relatively few acknowledgements arrived for political books, mostly from libraries and publications. The Ministry of Foreign Trade in Bucharest requested subscriptions to the

<sup>158</sup> April [1964] Highlights, dated May 5, 1964, 2.

<sup>159</sup> April [1966] Highlights, dated May 11, 1966, 10.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>161</sup> June [1966] Highlights, dated July 19, 1966, 9.

<sup>162</sup> June [1964] Highlights, dated July 17, 1964, 2.

<sup>163</sup> September [1965] Highlights, dated October 8, 1965, 7.

Foreign Policy Association series on *Understanding Foreign Aid and Italy, Change and Progress*.<sup>164</sup> Acknowledgements were also received from the Central Statistical Office of the Council of Ministers, the Faculty of Juridical Sciences at the University of Cluj, the Central University Library in Bucharest, the Central University Library of Cluj, and *Contemporanul*.<sup>165</sup> Books on politics and history were acknowledged and requested by a professor specializing in international affairs, who asked for four political books on American foreign relations, Russia and America, and Russia and China, the Institute of Juridical Research in Bucharest, Editura Politica, the political publishing house, the Institute of History of Bucharest, the Library of the Romanian Academy, the University Library in Cluj, and the German-language publication *Neuer Weg*.<sup>166</sup> Requests also came from the Central University Library of Iași, a library in Cluj, and from *Korunk*, which asked for Georges Langrod's *Le service civil international* and A. H. Robertson's *Conseil de l'Europe* (Council of Europe).<sup>167</sup>

Despite the increased censorship, requests and acknowledgements for political titles continued to arrive. Two economists acknowledged *Le capitalisme américain* by John Kenneth Galbraith. *Political Power and Personal Freedom* by Sidney Hook was acknowledged by the director of the Cluj branch of the Romanian Academy of Sciences and by the library of the University of Timișoara. The Cluj Library of the Romanian Academy of Sciences sent New Year greeting cards to *East Europe* magazine and to *Central European Federalist*.<sup>168</sup> A corresponding member of the Romanian Academy thanked for William Coplin's *Functions of International Law* and wrote that he was going to donate the book to the library of the Academy's Institute for Juridical Research.<sup>169</sup> A Bucharest economist wrote to two PSPD sponsors in New York and requested a number of books on political and economic topics. Letters from Romania requesting such material were relatively unexpected and rare. Titles requested included *On Dealing with the*

<sup>164</sup> May [1964] Highlights, dated June 10, 1964, 7.

<sup>165</sup> May [1965] Highlights, dated July 8, 1965, 7.

<sup>166</sup> October [1965] Highlights, dated November 8, 1965, 10.

<sup>167</sup> November [1965] Highlights, dated December 21, 1965, 9.

<sup>168</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1967, dated March 17, 1967, 8.

<sup>169</sup> Highlights September–October 1968, dated November 11, 1968, 18.

*Communist World* by George F. Kennan, *The Scientific Revolution and World Politics* by Cary P. Haskins, and a book on the EU and American trade. One such letter stated: "I shall bring these books to the attention of my students and to the whole body of Romanian economists."<sup>170</sup>

Acknowledgements of political books increased in 1968. The Institute of History in Iași thanked for books on the Arab-Israeli conflict, the battle of Britain, and Georges Gurvitch's *Études sur les classes sociale* (Studies on the social classes). 15 copies of the latter were sent and five acknowledged, one by the official Communist Party School, the Institute of History and Social-Political Studies.<sup>171</sup> By 1968, all the controversial and political books scheduled seemed to have reached their targets. PSPD was trying to keep journalists, newspapers, and party institutes well supplied, and several of its sponsors were in active correspondence with the Institute for History and Socio-Political Studies, whose head personally acknowledged the books sent to them. The libraries of the universities of Bucharest and Iași also received the books sent to them. PSPD tried to establish direct contact with leading political scientists, but with little luck. Either they were afraid to reply, uninterested in foreign books, or their grasp of foreign languages was insufficient.<sup>172</sup>

*Letters of special interest.* A Bucharest professor and Marxist who acknowledged Roger Garaudy's *Marxisme du 20ème siècle* (Twentieth-century Marxism) wrote: "In Mr. Garaudy's book there are many profound ideas of real value, but there are also many ideas which are debatable. I would like to refer to one of these, expressed in the preface of the book, the idea of the 'implacable logic of combat' which made possible the period of Stalinist dogmatism by imparting grave prejudices of Marxist socialism. If logic means reason and if reason means a critical spirit, I must state that I do not undersand the logic according to which one man, uncultured and unsuited to culture, succeeded in making all the others think like himself, including people who were

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<sup>170</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1967, dated January 18, 1968, 14.

<sup>171</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1968, dated March 14, 1968, 16.

<sup>172</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1968, dated November 11, 1968, 21.

far superior to him from the viewpoint of culture.”<sup>173</sup> A professor of French wrote a friendly letter to a French sponsor: “Why don’t you take a trip to Romania? Here in Sinaia in August, we have vacation courses for foreigners. Then in October there will be the celebration for the centenary of our university.”<sup>174</sup> A recipient of French books who wanted to purchase other books but could not pay in French francs offered in exchange a stay of two weeks or one month in the home of relatives “in a pretty village of Crișan located in the heart of the Danube delta. There is good fishing and hunting; you can [get to know] the Romanians better [...]”<sup>175</sup>

An economist wrote: “I think your generous activity enlarges the cultural significance of the interrelation between the peoples and lands.”<sup>176</sup> A high school teacher in Iași asked for the *Penguin Encyclopedia* and short stories for children, and ended his letter with the words: “Long live Romanian-English friendship.”<sup>177</sup> A Sibiu historian wrote to the Galerie Lambert, saying: “I must tell you that the choice of additional books was very difficult. All the titles mentioned are interesting, but finally I had to decide, in order not to die of inanition, like Buridan’s donkey.” [The donkey in question died of starvation because he could not make up his mind about what to eat].<sup>178</sup> A professor of German philology at Bucharest University apologized for having to ask for a German book, because “unfortunately, the relations between our two countries are still not yet inasmuch rife as to make possible the ordering of books through Cartimex, Bucharest [the official book-importing agency].”<sup>179</sup>

A student wrote to the New American Library, a PSPD sponsor: “I decided that Mr. NAL is a sort of Santa Claus and I wrote him a letter just informing him about the toys I would like to receive. Unexpectedly the make-believe went on and Mr. Santa Claus has sent

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<sup>173</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1967, dated November 10, 1967, 11.

<sup>174</sup> June [1964] Highlights, dated July 17, 1964, 4.

<sup>175</sup> September [1964] Highlights, dated October 15, 1964, 5.

<sup>176</sup> June [1966] Highlights, dated July 19, 1966, 8.

<sup>177</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1968, dated May 16, 1968, 13.

<sup>178</sup> March [1965] Highlights, dated April 5, 1965, 8.

<sup>179</sup> Highlights Report September 1969, dated October 6, 1969, 17.

me wonderful books without disclosing this mystery. It becomes more and more exciting, like a thriller! Of course, I would like to know who is so generous with me and why. I am very grateful to the unknown Mr. NAL who is playing Santa Claus with me in the middle of July.”<sup>180</sup> A school teacher wrote: “I wish that one day English would become a really international language—the second language of each people; then I think the fight for world peace would make a great pace [step] forward.” The Institute of Agronomy in Timișoara said: “We esteem the deed of your association and consider it a precious contribution to peace, understanding, and friendship between the people of the United States and other people, to establish a favorable climate for the development of science and culture in the world.”<sup>181</sup>

Sample copies of *Vogue* with an offer of a one-year subscription were sent to 80 addressees, and yielded 27 replies by November 1965. One 19-year-old misunderstood the subscription offer to mean that she could select items shown in the magazine and listed 18 items she wanted, including clothes, nail polish, perfume, jewelry, and records of classical music and jazz.<sup>182</sup> A Bucharest theatre critic who received *The Encore Reader* wrote: “[...] its kaleidoscopic structure affords flash-lights in matters concerning the contemporary theatre. The comments which it has aroused among my friends and acquaintances [...] show how very important and efficient such books can be, whenever a well-inspired initiative succeeds in ‘opening some of the seals’ which impede all of us in our efforts to know one another better.”<sup>183</sup> New American Library received a letter from the president of the International Congress of Linguists, inviting it to exhibit its books at the Twelfth International Congress of Roman Linguistics and Philology, to be held in Bucharest on April 15–20, 1968. An exhibit of books on these subjects would be shown during the congress, and the books would subsequently be given to Romanian libraries. PSPD did not know if NAL had decided to participate in the exhibit or not.<sup>184</sup>

<sup>180</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1968, dated November 11, 1968, 19.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>182</sup> November [1965] Highlights, dated December 21, 1965, 9. She was probably quite disappointed.

<sup>183</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1967, dated May 10, 1967, 9.

<sup>184</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1968, dated March 14, 1968, 17.

A translator at a research institute of the Romanian Academy of Sciences explained to a French sponsor in Aix-en-Provence that Romanian state publishing houses awarded contracts for translations to whoever came forward first with a version of the book they wished to publish. She believed that the advice of the sponsor would give her the edge over her competitors.<sup>185</sup> A chemical engineer from Timișoara wrote that while on holiday on the Romanian seashore, he had met and befriended an optician from Budapest, “who was so kind as to communicate to me your address and told me to write to you with confidence.” He requested English books, and explained: “In the whole country there is in general a great interest in [the] English language; this could also be explained as a professional necessity. In my circle, many people speak, read, or learn English.”<sup>186</sup> A woman who studied and taught in the U.S. and who wrote a doctoral thesis at Columbia University on the assimilation of Romanians living in the U.S. wrote to Professor Henry Steele Commager about his book *Immigration and American History*, saying she regretted that neither Commager’s nor Oscar Handlin’s book *Immigration as a Factor in American History* mentioned the Romanians, besides a casual mention of “Romanian Jews” in Handlin’s book. She asked: “But do such incidental mentions allow the reader to grasp the contribution of the Romanians—both Jews and Gentiles—to their American environment?”<sup>187</sup>

An English teacher in Bucharest thanked for *The World of Washington Irving* by J. F. McDermott, and wrote: “For some time I’ll be happy again. And this happiness came just now when I saw walking in our Bucharest streets your President, Mister Richard Nixon. I am still living under the profound impression produced [to] me by this visit. It was as a dream and I felt as in a world of fancy. But what is more, the President promised us to establish in our capital an American public library. I hope this promise will be materialized in a short time.”<sup>188</sup> A student wrote: “This week I have been able to watch [on] TV the formidable event of our century—Armstrong’s first step on the Moon. Well, I have now the occasion to express my high

<sup>185</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1968, dated January 15, 1969, 22.

<sup>186</sup> Highlights Report September 1969, dated October 6, 1969, 16–17.

<sup>187</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1968, dated March 14, 1968, 15.

<sup>188</sup> Highlights Report July–August 1969, dated September 16, 1969, 20.

esteem, my admiration for the three American astronauts' courage [...] I would be the happiest of all if I were in New York during the beautiful parade especially organized in their honour."<sup>189</sup>

The U.S. Consul in Bucharest forwarded a request from a translator at the Institute for Automation in Bucharest, who was preparing his doctoral thesis on the organization and administration of justice in the United States, with special emphasis on federal-state relations, at the Faculty of Law of Bucharest University, requesting six books on U.S. law.<sup>190</sup> A doctor in Bucharest wrote: "I appreciate very much your hard work to help mankind by way of books, to be better in a world full of sorrows and intolerance. May the coming year be a happier one than the preceding one by restoring peace and understanding all over the world, then I [will] believe in a brighter future for humanity."<sup>191</sup> A young ten-year-old student in Constanța asked for books and mentioned that UNICEF had children's clubs in Romania that organized English courses. In letters mailed from Spain, officers in the Romanian fishing fleet requested books to improve their English and asked that the books be mailed to their homes.<sup>192</sup> A visitor with a Hungarian name wrote in French to Galerie Lambert, saying: "Going through Paris, I am happy to have the opportunity to thank you most sincerely in my name and that of my friends for the great service you are rendering to us by sending us books. It is not necessary to stress that each book is reached by a great number of persons who, unfortunately, do not have any other possibility to obtain them."<sup>193</sup> Two students of French from Birlad made the most unusual request. In two separate letters, they asked in French for "a few books concerning my studies in French," and listed two titles, *Soljenitsine* by Georg Lukács and *La liberté intellectuelle en URSS et la coexistence* (Intellectual freedom in the USSR and coexistence) by André Sakharov.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>190</sup> Highlights Report December 1969, dated January 7, 1970, 19.

<sup>191</sup> Undated Romanian Bi-Monthly Report for November–December 1970, 3. Courtesy of Ioana Alimanestianu.

<sup>192</sup> Undated Romanian Bi-Monthly Report for March–April 1974, 4. Courtesy of Ioana Alimanestianu.

<sup>193</sup> Undated Romanian Report for July–September 1974, 2. Courtesy of Ioana Alimanestianu.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., 2.



The great demand for books was understandable considering the fact that Romanian bookshops and even libraries were short of foreign-language material. Zdeněk Mastník of Interpress Ltd., the major PSPD mailer and distributor in London, wrote on September 25, 1968: "We got four kilograms (nearly nine pounds) of mail from Romania in one week." In September, 987 requests reached Interpress. They had stopped sending out new offers three months earlier, but as many as a 100 new names were added to Interpress's lists every week during September. The figures for October were even higher: over 1,000 requests for books and up to 150 new names and addresses each week. The majority of the requests came from students, some from teachers and doctors, and a few from government officials and people in the art world. A British MP returning from a trip to Romania told Mastník that he found the demand for English literature in the country "unbelievable."<sup>195</sup>

In November and December 1968, 6,800 letters from Romania were processed and PSPD still had 6,160 letters to be dealt with. More than 300 of these letters were spontaneous requests. Interpress reported: "Romanian demand has overstepped practical means of delivery. We increased the number of packages [mailed] to 50 a day and even so the number of unfulfilled orders is estimated at some 3,000." The sponsor decided to introduce a grading of requests, giving priority to teachers and well-known intellectuals, whose requests were processed by mail within some ten days. Next came those who had duly confirmed receipt of previous parcels, followed by the rest. Each request was numbered to guarantee a fair deal. There was a great demand for glossary books on modern art. Interpress stopped mailing more than one requested title, and added instead a book of English idioms. The editor of the student magazine *Echinox* in Cluj asked for books on literature, philosophy, and art, saying: "We are all young but we lack material."<sup>196</sup> Daisy Finney, PSPD's representative in England, wrote: "There seems to be a considerable increase in request letters rather than in responses to our mailings. Blackwell [a bookshop, publisher, and sponsor in Oxford] alone now has about 100–150 of them, mostly asking for language books."

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<sup>195</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1968, dated November 11, 1968, 20.

<sup>196</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1968, dated January 15, 1969, 20.



The publishing house of Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd. wrote: "I am impressed by the number of letters which seek the supply of an English grammar, conversation material, etc."<sup>197</sup>

In May and June 1969, spontaneous requests continued to arrive in great quantity. Interpress in London, the Galerie Lambert and Larousse in Paris, and Books Unlimited and the International Book Center in New York received as many as 100 requests each week. The letters to Interpress, Galerie Lambert, and Books Unlimited were predominantly requests for books on English, French, and American language and literature. The inflow to London continued to be so great that Interpress reported it still had 5,000 unprocessed request letters. Requests for *Larousse* dictionaries continued to arrive, though they were now being sent only to teachers of French and students of philology. Many letters of thanks were also received.<sup>198</sup> The flow of mail from Romania remained so heavy that it overtaxed PSPD sponsors' ability to deal with it. During September 1969 alone, 854 letters addressed to Interpress were processed in New York. Many request letters came from students who had already received books in previous months. Because of tight budgetary circumstances, many of these new requests had to be put aside in the hope that it would be possible to send something at a later date. During October 1969, Galerie Lambert received some 500 letters and requests for about 700 titles. Interpress received and processed 600 letters and processed another 1,360 letters from its backlog. Only a small proportion of these requests could be approved.<sup>199</sup>

Requests received in November 1969 remained overwhelmingly high, with approximately 5,000 letters of request processed. Of these, some 1,900 were received in France, with the largest number, 561, going to André Mari in Aix-en-Provence. Galerie Lambert received 327 letters, Larousse 210, and about 800 went to various French publishers. Over 600 letters were sent to the United States, 200 to Germany, and 2,400 to Britain, where the bulk of them, 2,253, arrived at Interpress, Ltd. in London. While many letters came from Bucharest, a large proportion also came from provincial cities—Arad,

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<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>198</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1969, dated July 11, 1969, 20.

<sup>199</sup> Highlights Report September 1969, dated October 1969, 18–19, and Highlights Report October 1969, dated November 7, 1969, 18.

Timișoara, Brașov, Bacău, Constanța, Iași—and even smaller towns and villages such as Băsești (Maramureș County), Tâlmaci (Sibiu County), Călărași (Călărași County) and Pleșcuța (Arad County). The letters indicated a tremendous interest in learning foreign languages, above all English, and to a lesser extent French. Many of them came from students and teachers, but physicians, engineers, architects, and ordinary workers also sent a notable number.<sup>200</sup>

By February 1970, a backlog of some 1,200 letters of request had accumulated at Interpress in London, mainly for art publications, textbooks, and dictionaries. While this sponsor received most of the Romanian letters sent to Britain, the other British sponsors received approximately 1,000 letters. Galerie Lambert averaged 350 letters a month, Larousse about 100–200, and the other French sponsors about 200–300 a month. Romanian letters sent to the U.S. averaged about 400–500 a month. The request letters carried the same familiar message as before, relating the difficulties to find Western books and/or to pay for them. Many letters requesting help were sent by teachers having to teach without textbooks and eager to give their students more than plain and unattractive grammar courses. The report also noted: “The Romanian students seemed to have become very aggressive individuals. They are truly interested in learning foreign languages and say so.”<sup>201</sup> In March and April 1971, a total of 5,101 letters were received, acknowledging 2,200 books and periodicals and requesting 6,782 more. Most of the requests, 2,815, were addressed to Interpress. Other publishers in England received over 600 requests, and 1,182 requests were sent to the U.S. The demand for English books by far surpassed that for French and German books, which amounted to about 2,000 and 76 respectively. The wife of the U.S. Ambassador in Bucharest wrote to three PSPD sponsors asking for books for their Children’s Library containing American children’s books, stating that “this kind of facility is not provided for by United States government funds.”<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Highlights Report November 1969, dated December 5, 1969, 20.

<sup>201</sup> Undated Romanian Bi-Monthly Report for January–February 1970, 7. Courtesy of Ioana Alimanestianu.

<sup>202</sup> Undated Romanian Bi-Monthly Report for March–April 1971, 1. Courtesy of Ioana Alimanestianu.

Under Nicolae Ceaușescu, mailed books were allowed relatively free access to Romania, and his book-starved people were more than eager to take advantage of it. In the first half of 1971, 40.7% of all the mail IAC received came from Romania, and Romanians asked for 47.6% of all the books requested. Requests concentrated heavily on books dealing with language, literature, arts, and architecture. The bulk of the letters, over one-half of the requests, came from students, and more Romanian senior party and government leaders wrote to IAC than from any other target country.<sup>203</sup> In the first half of 1972, requests from Romania amounted to some 30,000 books, or 62.5% of all requests received from the five East European target countries. 41.2% of these requests were fulfilled, seriously taxing the budgetary means of IAC's New York Book Center.<sup>204</sup> There are no further semi-annual reports available to indicate whether this massive surge of Romanian requests for Western books subsided in the years that followed.

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<sup>203</sup> George C. Minden, IAC undated Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, January 1 to June 30, 1971, 18–19. HIA, George Minden Collection, Box 1. In the second half of 1970, 60% of all requests received by IAC came from Romania. George C. Minden, IAC undated Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, July 1 to December 31, 1970, 16. Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> George C. Minden, IAC undated Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, January 1 to June 30, 1972, 19. Ibid. A year later, Romanian requests declined to 22,000, with Czechoslovakia a distant second with about 6,000 requests. George C. Minden, IAC undated Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, January 1 to June 30, 1973, 30. Ibid. This is the last report available in the Minden Collection at the Hoover Institution Archives.

## CHAPTER 18

# Letters from Bulgaria Despite Very Strict Censorship

Of the five East European countries targeted by the book project, Bulgaria, together with Romania, was in the hold of a very strict censorship. This was one of the main reasons why responses and requests were initially very modest as compared to Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. In 1963, except for the month of December, Bulgaria was ahead of its northern neighbor Romania. In March 47 responses and 62 requests were received, with a high of 108 responses and 66 requests in November, and with both falling below 100 (63/41) in December.<sup>1</sup> One year later, Bulgaria still accounted for only 41 books acknowledged and 40 requested.<sup>2</sup> In February 1965, only 23 books were acknowledged and 29 requested, followed by 58 acknowledgements and 91 requests in April. Responses increased sharply in December, to 104 letters, compared to an average of 50 during the previous ten months. They included requests for 162 books and acknowledgements for 56. PSPD assumed that word of mouth was responsible for the increase. By June 1966, the number of books requested rose to 174 as compared to 106 in May. In 1967, mail from Bulgaria steadily increased, with February the third consecutive month when more than 100 letters were received—105 in December 1966,

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<sup>1</sup> Memorandum to the President [FEC] from George C. Minden, December [1963] Highlights, dated January 10, 1964, 1. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Archives, Microfiche Provisional Box 3. All letters quoted up to the January–February [1970] Highlights originate from this source.

<sup>2</sup> December [1964] Highlights, dated January 11, 1965, 1.

102 in January 1967, and 131 in February 1967. Letters continued to rise to 171 in March, 182 in April, 186 in March, and 202 in June. During the first half of 1967, a total of 1,222 books had been acknowledged and 1,120 requested, a remarkable increase over previous years.<sup>3</sup> During the entire year 1967, Bulgarian recipients acknowledged a total of 2,346 books and requested 2,010.<sup>4</sup> Figures for 1968 showed little change, with a total of 2,683 books acknowledged and 2,380 requested, placing Bulgaria far behind the other four East European countries. In the last two months of 1968, PSPD sent 4,530 books to Bulgaria and received only 549 acknowledgements and 734 requests.<sup>5</sup>

The exchange of books between the three principal Bulgarian libraries—the National Library and the Libraries of Sofia and Varna Universities—and the New York Public Library, a PSPD sponsor, accounted for the majority of the responses and requests. For the first time, Bulgarian libraries requested all of the political books scheduled during the last three months. (A list of requests accumulated during this period was given to PSPD in May 1964 by the New York Public Library). Approximately a third of the 92 books requested by the three libraries dealt with Soviet policies or were anti-Communist. They included Adam Ulam's *The New Face of Soviet Totalitarianism*, Herbert Muller's *Freedom in the Western World*, Merle Fainsod's *How Russia is Ruled*, and Roger Pethybridge's *A Key to Soviet Politics*. The Central Library of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences offered to exchange books with a French sponsor, Librairie du XXème Siècle in Paris. The latter was already exchanging books with the Cyril and Methodius National Library in Sofia.<sup>6</sup> The University Library in Sofia confirmed the receipt of books sent and asked for 20 more. "Our readers take a great interest in these publications," they wrote, "and since we have no other possibility to acquire them, we rely on your kind understanding. We may kindly inform you that the University Library of Sofia coordinates all gifts and exchanges for the university libraries of Bulgaria."<sup>7</sup> The Foreign Language Press in Sofia also suggested an exchange of

<sup>3</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1967, dated July 18, 1967, 1.

<sup>4</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1967, dated January 18, 1968, 1.

<sup>5</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1968, dated January 15, 1969, 1.

<sup>6</sup> May [1964] Highlights, dated June 10, 1964, 8.

<sup>7</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1968, dated May 16, 1968, 15.

publications to Penguin Books in England. "We will forward copies of your list of reference books to various cultural organizations, which I am sure will order some copies," they said. "We are sending you a list of our publications and a novel and a collection of short stories, which you may consider reproducing in a Penguin edition."<sup>8</sup>

Twelve gift book order forms were mailed to Bulgaria, offering three titles to be selected from a list. By January, only one response had come in, from the University Library of Varna. 32 forms were mailed in February and March 1966, and only two requests arrived, both from libraries.<sup>9</sup> Responses to gift book order forms continued to be slow. A total of a 100 copies of three different gift order forms were mailed in September and October 1967 to professors, students, government officials, and others. One form offered a choice of readers for students of English; the other two forms, which were mailed together, included one offering a choice of three books from a list of 20 books on literature, the English language, art, history, etc., and one offering a choice of three books from a list of 15 books on management and business. By the end of October, only nine responses had arrived, including four from the Gift and Exchange Department of the University of Sofia, although the order forms had only been sent to students at the University. Either the students were afraid to reply directly and used the University as an intermediary, or their forms had been turned over to the University, which used them to request books for itself.<sup>10</sup> A gift book offer, asking recipients to choose from an enclosed list, elicited 12 requests for language and history books, most of them from provincial towns. In 1968, 100 offer forms each month were mailed to Bulgaria.<sup>11</sup>

In 1967, regular contacts were maintained with many Bulgarian libraries, universities, and other cultural institutions. The Cyril and Methodius National Library in Sofia acknowledged a number of books and sent one of the sponsors a list of 93 titles on philosophy,

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<sup>8</sup> April [1965] Highlights, dated May 4, 1965, 10.

<sup>9</sup> February [1966] Highlights, dated March 9, 1966, 12, and March [1966] Highlights, dated April 5, 1965, 12.

<sup>10</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1967, dated November 10, 1967, 14.

<sup>11</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1968, dated May 16, 1968, 16.

psychology, history, and economics from the *Que sais-je?* Series published by Presses Universitaires that it wished to receive under a book exchange agreement. Other institutions regularly heard from were the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, the Universities of Sofia and Varna, and the Institute for Advanced Studies of Economics and Finances in Svishtov.<sup>12</sup> Contacts with Bulgarian institutions further increased in 1967. The University of Sofia seemed particularly eager to receive Western books. The head of its Gift and Exchange Department wrote to three PSPD sponsors asking for a total of 91 books. The titles included many scientific books and a number of dictionaries and reference books. She also asked for the *New Yorker*, *Newsweek*, *Vogue*, and some books on management.<sup>13</sup>

The Bulgarian Academy of Sciences regularly acknowledged receipt of the books sent and put in requests for books it wanted, including books on the United States and American painting, arts, skills, and folklore. By 1968, PSPD had become a major supplier of books to the Academy, which in one single letter requested 25 books.<sup>14</sup> The Institute for Foreign Trade Researches in Sofia acknowledged the receipt of *Worldwide International Economic Institutions* by Ervin P. Hexner sent by the British Society for Understanding, with a handwritten note in Bulgarian indicating that the book was destined "for translation." The important Karl Marx Institute of Economics acknowledged receipt of a copy of *National Geographic* and requested a year's subscription with the comment that "it was of great interest to our professors and students." Twenty of the 25 addressees who received this offer accepted it.<sup>15</sup> The University Library in Sofia requested 18 books and subscriptions to 28 periodicals, including *Mussolini and Italian Fascism* by William S. Halperin, *Soviet Russian Imperialism* by Victor S. Mamatey, *Martov: Political Biography of a Russian Social Democrat* by Israel Getzler, and *British Constitutional History since 1832* by Robert L. Schuyler and Corrine C. Weston.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1967, dated July 18, 1967, 14.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>14</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1968, dated November 11, 1968, 23.

<sup>15</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1967, dated July 18, 1967, 14.

<sup>16</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1970, dated March 19, 1970, 24.

Responses and requests from individuals remained modest and far behind those received from the other East European countries, including Romania. A three-year delay in confirmation was explained by the Director of Maritsa, the Scientific Research Institute for Vegetable Crops in Plovdiv, by saying that he had been abroad for one year.<sup>17</sup> The following year, a candid Bulgarian correspondent wrote: "Your offer is the most pleasant surprise [...] especially if you consider the possibilities in my country."<sup>18</sup> Requests came in from people whose friends had told them about a gift list they had received in the fall of 1962. A party functionary in the administration of the University of Varna wrote to Larousse with the sole purpose of wishing them "best wishes on July 14, the national holiday of France which I have always esteemed and loved." The head of the National Library's Department of Gifts and Exchanges wrote to *Librairie du XXème Siècle*, saying: "We would like to hope our exchanges will develop more and more."<sup>19</sup>

In August 1964, the majority of the acknowledgements and requests came from individuals rather than from libraries, and fewer people wrote to say that they had not received the book or magazine of whose arrival they had been informed. Requests showed interest in American literature, French translation, and French literature.<sup>20</sup> In contrast to previous months, at the end of 1965 there was an increase in the number of letters received, and a greater variety of correspondents. But it was too early to tell if this was a new trend or merely a temporary fluctuation. Most correspondents were physicians, technicians, or scientists thanking or asking for material in their fields. A sprinkling of letters was received from professors, writers, journalists, and artists.<sup>21</sup> In subsequent years, spontaneous requests also came in, and occasionally someone sent the names of friends who also wished to receive books. A doctor in Sofia wrote to the International Book Fellowship in London asking for two books on the history of the U.S. and of Europe respectively, giving the names of four others in Sofia

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<sup>17</sup> November [1963] Highlights, dated December 6, 1963, 3.

<sup>18</sup> April [1964] Highlights, dated May 5, 1964, 1.

<sup>19</sup> September [1963] Highlights, dated October 4, 1963, 4.

<sup>20</sup> September [1964] Highlights, dated October 8, 1964, 5.

<sup>21</sup> December [1964] Highlights, dated January 11, 1965, 8, and January [1965] Highlights, dated February 5, 1965, 8.



who also wanted to receive books.<sup>22</sup> A most promising development was the fact that Bulgarian book recipients passed on the addresses of PSPD's sponsors to their friends or forwarded their friends' addresses to the sponsors. They also sent spontaneous requests for books, or asked sponsors to send application forms to other individuals. An English teacher in Gabrovo, who received a list of books, wrote: "I have retyped the list and the application form and given copies to some of my colleagues and friends from Gabrovo and Sofia—I hope I have not done anything wrong, I am really interested in your scheme—I have been so glad and am so grateful for the books you sent me last winter."<sup>23</sup> In 1969, the names and addresses of PSPD's sponsors continued to be passed on from hand to hand, and a number of letters were received, either giving the names and addresses of friends of the writer who would also like to receive books, or saying that the writer had been given the sponsor's address by a friend.<sup>24</sup>

*Literature and language.* Requests from individuals showed particular interest in American and English literature, as well as in French literature, culture, and translation. These books were also the ones that were most often acknowledged. In addition, there were requests for dictionaries and anthologies. The editor-in-chief of *Bulgaria* thanked for the receipt of *Fifty Years of English Literature* by William E. Cain, and added: "I have presented it to the library of our Foreign Language Press, which publishes *Bulgaria*, as I feel that far more people will have access to it than if I kept it on my own bookshelves."<sup>25</sup> After months of silence, Boyan Bolgar, well-known writer, acknowledged a book on Faulkner and Maxime Heman's *Histoire de la littérature polonaise*. His letter of November 17, 1964, came in response to letters from a sponsor dated January 20 and September 25, 1964. In March 1964, Bolgar had been sharply criticized by *Rabotnichesko Delo*, the official organ of the Bulgarian Communist Party, and his delay in acknowledging the books sent to him was probably caused by his lapse from official favor.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1968, dated July 22, 1968, 19.

<sup>23</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1968, dated November 11, 1968, 15.

<sup>24</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1969, dated July 11, 1969, 24.

<sup>25</sup> December [1964] Highlights, dated January 11, 1965, 9.

<sup>26</sup> January [1965] Highlights Report, dated February 5, 1965, 9.

A teacher of English in Turnovo, who received the *Penguin Encyclopedia* edited by John Summerscale and *American Literature* by Bartholow Kern, Alexander Needleman, and Morris Crawford, wrote: "[...] the lack of books and the impossibility of obtaining them is something which has always troubled my work with the English language and literature." He asked for other language books, and gave the names of three of his students who also wished to receive books.<sup>27</sup> A student at the Sofia State University stressed the serious lack of books on English literature. He wrote that he had to take an examination on English writers from the eighteenth century onwards, "but the trouble with us is that the books we have to read are not available in Bulgaria [...] We can't find any books which give us a general idea of the whole period. The only source of literary knowledge of this period are the lectures of our professor [...] The only thing one could find in our library are a few copies of a book on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>-century English literature written by some Russian literary critics. I do not find them very useful. All the more [as] they are published in Russian."<sup>28</sup> An increasing number of requests for books to help learn English arrived. Five letters sent from Sofia and worded identically asked for two books from PSPD's book order form. Two of these letters seemed to come from a husband and wife, the other three from members of another family.<sup>29</sup>

A well-known educator and linguist in Sofia thanked for *The Teaching of Modern Languages*, and wrote: "This book will be of enormous service to me as I am now writing a series of textbooks in English and [am] experimenting with them at a newly established Centre of Suggestology [sic] at the Ministry of Education in Sofia. It is a unique experience of being able to teach over 100 new words and phrases to beginners every day, use being made of special intonation and music as background."<sup>30</sup> The librarian of the Cyril and Methodius Higher Institute of Pedagogy in the city of Trnovo stressed the lack of English textbooks and books on linguistics. Writing for the first time and at his own initiative, he requested nine books on English linguistics, saying: "Our readers take a great interest in these publications and

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<sup>27</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1967, dated November 10, 1967, 13.

<sup>28</sup> September [1965] Highlights, dated October 8, 1965, 8.

<sup>29</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1967, dated March 17, 1967, 12.

<sup>30</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1968, dated March 14, 1968, 18.

since we have no other possibility to acquire them, we rely on your kind understanding.”<sup>31</sup> A letter to the International Advisory Council stated: “I thank you very much for sending me the book on English grammar. This has proved to be a most useful textbook to me and will be of immense help in my teaching of the English language to those who are most eager to learn it. [...] I am in urgent need of books on useful conversations wherein the vocabulary is used by the educated people, be it in the States or in England in their everyday intercourse with one another.” A professor at the University of Sofia wrote: “I am delighted to get the excellent books [...] They will be very useful to me in my teaching practice.” He also gave the name of a colleague at the university who wished to receive books.<sup>32</sup>

A correspondent in the provincial town of Kalofer thanked for an English grammar, and wrote: “I am also interested in the readers the school children in the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> grade use. Many friends have asked me to teach their children English and I need these readers for them.”<sup>33</sup> A research engineer wrote that *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* he received was “practically every day on my desk last year since I am compiling an English-Bulgarian dictionary for mechanical engineers with my colleague Stefan Semerdjiev.”<sup>34</sup> A lecturer in English at Varna University thanked for four English language books and wrote that they “would facilitate my conducting my English lectures with greater ease.” He saw his English curriculum as a way of disclosing “the whole grandeur of the language of Shakespeare and his motherland.”<sup>35</sup> A graduate of the English College in Istanbul, whose entire family had been banished from Sofia some years earlier, thanked for Roget’s *College Thesaurus* edited by Philip D. Morehead, and asked for 11 more titles. He lived in Kalofer, a Balkan mountain town in Plovdiv province, where he gave private lessons largely with the help of books supplied through PSPD.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>32</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1967, dated May 10, 1967, 13.

<sup>33</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1968, dated July 22, 1968, 18.

<sup>34</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1968, dated November 11, 1968, 24.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>36</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1969, dated July 11, 1969, 22.

*French literature and language.* A writer in Sofia simultaneously sent twelve letters of request to Editions Seghers in Paris, a PSPD sponsor, addressed to the French authors listed on the cover of a book he had received previously. He asked the authors for autographed copies of their books, to be sent by registered mail, and said he wished to translate the works he had requested.<sup>37</sup> He continued his activity the following month by writing to two more authors at Editions Seghers. In one letter to Charles Moulin, asking for an autographed copy of his book on Loys Masson, he stated: "French poetry is my weakness and a window opened on the great movements of the human spirit."<sup>38</sup> More than half of the requests were for books on language and literature. The communist writer and translator Georgi Mitzkov asked for 61 books of French poems, explaining that he was translating these poems for an anthology on French contemporary poetry in Bulgarian. He asked that the books be sent to *Narodna Kultura* (People's culture), the official organ of the Ministry of National Education and the state publishing house.<sup>39</sup> On November 20, 1965, the Bulgarian National Library acknowledged three books on French literature it had requested on November 2—a very short time interval which seemed to preclude any censorship control.<sup>40</sup>

A Sofia correspondent who was working on an anthology of French poetry in Bulgarian and received books on various French poets, wrote that the anthology was almost completed. "We are now going to do an anthology of English poetry," he continued, "and we would like to consult the English anthology published by you." A teacher of French wrote: "My students, future engineers, electricians, and mechanics, study French with love and are eager to read the little technical books of your library."<sup>41</sup> A professor of French at the Institute of Economic and Financial Studies in Svishtov acknowledged the receipt of 24 books and four records, all dictionaries and French language texts. He explained that he had organized a French circle for advanced students and another French circle for the assistants teaching

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<sup>37</sup> January [1965] Highlights, dated February 5, 1965, 9.

<sup>38</sup> February [1965] Highlights, dated March 5, 1965, 8.

<sup>39</sup> December [1965] Highlights, dated January 13, 1966, 13.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> February [1966] Highlights, dated March 9, 1966, 11.

at his institute. He also described the difficulties in obtaining books. "We are strictly forbidden to apply to the French Embassy in Sofia [for books]. We do not have foreign currency and we are forced either to live outside of the progress made by the publishers and schools in France in the field of teaching living languages, or to humiliate ourselves to a certain extent and ask for the sending free of charge of teaching and linguistic materials." His letter stressed the popularity of French. "Russian is obligatory for all students [...] The students can choose between French, English, and German as their second language. About 70% choose French, about 20% German, and less than 10% English."<sup>42</sup>

A professor of economics in Svishtov, interested in art and letters, wrote to a sponsor in Paris asking for a subscription to *La Quinzaine littéraire* (Literary bi-weekly). "I studied in France and know well the kindness of the French and I believe you would not deny me this great request."<sup>43</sup> A professor of French bewailed the lack of French books in Bulgaria and wrote: "The study of French is well developed in Bulgaria. About 60% of our students learn French [...] However, I have come up against certain difficulties. Economic and cultural ties between my country and France are very restricted. It is an obstacle in my work. I would like to do all I can so that our young people will be attracted by the democratic spirit of French culture, but I am not sufficiently convincing since I do not have enough documentation [...] Modern teaching materials, the works of contemporary French literature, are completely lacking."<sup>44</sup> Two years later, probably the same professor asked for several French works, and noted in French: "Cultural and economic ties between my country and France are very restricted and this is an impediment to my work. I will do everything so that our young people become fond of the democratic and human spirit of your culture but I am not sufficiently convincing because of inadequate information [...] Works by classical and contemporary French authors are not sold in Bulgaria and the same applies to audio-visual material from France." He noted that the German language

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<sup>42</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1967, dated March 17, 1967, 11.

<sup>43</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1967, dated May 10, 1967, 13.

<sup>44</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1968, dated March 14, 1968, 18.

professor was in a much better situation because he received books and other materials from German publishing houses and the German cultural center in Sofia, while he himself completely lacked modern didactical and above all audio-visual material. No works by classical and contemporary French writers were sold in Bulgaria, and orders placed by private individuals with the Bulgarian foreign book importer 'Hemus' had to be paid in convertible currency while his salary was paid in national currency. "My problem is the problem of most of the French professors of my country [...] It is hard for me to submit a request. I am ashamed but what can I do. I waited for twenty years for the improvement of relations between Bulgaria and France. My life is spent waiting and I cannot deal with the linguistic problems which are of interest to me."<sup>45</sup>

After receiving *Culture et civilisation françaises* (French culture and civilization), the professor of French at the Higher Institute of Economics and Finance in Svishtov complained: "Economic and cultural relations between my country and France being very limited, there is no possibility to obtain and use French books. For more than twenty years, French books are practically no longer sold in Bulgaria."<sup>46</sup> The Library of the University of Sofia wrote to a French sponsor: "Interest in French literature on the part of our readers is very great and your noble efforts to distribute French books is worthy of great esteem."<sup>47</sup> A professor in Sofia acknowledged receipt of *Dictionnaire de la philosophie* (Dictionary of philosophy). "Your dictionaries are truly remarkable works," he said, "and have become indispensable in our daily work." He asked for two more, one of them a dictionary of French modern literature, because "young people are beginning to be very interested in these subjects."<sup>48</sup> The Director of the Central Library of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences requested 25 French books, including 15 on regional France.<sup>49</sup> A literary critic

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<sup>45</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1970, dated March 10, 1970, 25–6.

<sup>46</sup> Monthly Report May–June 1971, 27, as quoted in George C. Minden, IAC undated Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, January 1 to June 1971, 4.

<sup>47</sup> Highlights Report July–August 1967, dated September 10, 1967, 11.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Highlights Report July–August 1969, dated September 16, 1969, 23.

from Sofia wrote to Editions Seghers asking for a copy of Nevena B. Stefanova's *Anthologie de la poésie bulgare* (Anthology of Bulgarian poetry) it had published in 1968. The Bulgarian authorities did not permit the book's distribution at the time of its publication.<sup>50</sup>

An encouraging sign was the fact that letters from students and other young people asking for books were beginning to arrive. A final-year student at the University of Sofia asked a French publisher for six titles, most of them on physics but including one on literature, too. He wrote: "Would you be so kind as to tell me how I may obtain these books in view of the difficulties in securing foreign currency?"<sup>51</sup> A poet and translator asked for Marguerite Yourcenar's *Constantin Cavafy* and five more French books.<sup>52</sup> A translator, who had received Franz Kafka's *Der Prozess* (The trial) and *Das Schloss* (The castle), wrote that the former would be published towards the end of 1966 or the beginning of 1967. The two volumes were used by one of his friends, a university assistant, to prepare a book of literary and scientific criticism of Kafka. "Now I would like to acquaint the general public with Kafka by means of his short stories, publishing some of these stories in our periodicals."<sup>53</sup> There was a request for Constantin Jelenski's *Anthologie de la poésie polonaise* (Anthology of Polish poetry).<sup>54</sup> Despite the censors' greater watchfulness, the demand for books on language and literature remained high throughout 1969. A student at the Frédéric Joliot-Curie School of Foreign Languages in Varna who often translated French texts wrote that he only had a French-Bulgarian dictionary, and asked for the *Petit Larousse*.<sup>55</sup>

*Theatre.* An official at the Balkan Satirical Theatre in Sofia requested 19 books, including works by Kafka, James Joyce, Thornton Wilder, Beckett, and Brecht.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>51</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1967, dated July 18, 1967, 14.

<sup>52</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1968, dated January 15, 1969, 25.

<sup>53</sup> February [1966] Highlights, dated March 9, 1966, 11.

<sup>54</sup> May [1966] Highlights, dated June 13, 1966, 11.

<sup>55</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1969, dated July 11, 1969, 24.

<sup>56</sup> April [1966] Highlights, dated May 11, 1966, 11.



*Philosophy.* Józef Maria Bocheński's *La philosophie contemporaine en Europe* (Contemporary philosophy in Europe) was requested by the Cyril and Methodius Library in Sofia.<sup>57</sup>

*History.* Professor Gaston Sergheraert's series, entitled *La présence de la Bulgarie dans les lettres françaises* (The Bulgarian presence in French literature), and his work *Symeon le Grand* (Simeon the Great) continued to evoke great interest.<sup>58</sup> A request for 28 books by Sofia University included *Reflections on Modern History* by Hans Kohn, books on Russian history and culture, and books on Western civilization.<sup>59</sup>

*Sociology.* The head of the Division of Economic Information of the Institute of Economics of the Bulgarian Academy was very grateful for *Political Sociology: Selected Essays* by Lewis Coser, and added: "I hope it will be of great use to my colleagues and me in the field of scientific economic information." She asked for "your new publications you think most suitable for our work."<sup>60</sup>

*Economics.* Acknowledgements from the State Planning Committee were rare, but the head of its International Department acknowledged a book on economics, and wrote: "Hoping that you will not forget our State Committee for Planning [...] in other words, [that] you will not lose the occasion to send us some new books."<sup>61</sup>

*Medicine.* Many requests for books on medicine and psychology arrived, showing that there was no fear on the part of doctors to request medical journals in German. Several Bulgarians who had seen letters sent to their friends offering free subscription renewals to *Münchener Medizinische Wochenschrift* (Munich medical weekly) asked to be

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<sup>57</sup> May [1966] Highlights, dated June 13, 1966, 11.

<sup>58</sup> November [1963] Highlights, dated December 6, 1963, 3.

<sup>59</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1968, dated July 11, 1968, 19.

<sup>60</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1968, dated March 14, 1968, 18. *Social Anthology – Opus 15* by Godfrey Lienhardt, which was mailed to 30 sociologists, psychiatrists and anthropologists, elicited 21 acknowledgements of receipt. Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1967, dated July 18, 1967, 14.



included in the offers.<sup>62</sup> The *Deutscher Ärzte-Kalender 1965* (German doctors' calendar 1965) yielded many acknowledgements from hospitals, medical institutions, and a number of prominent doctors. The head of the Center of Medical Documentation of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in Sofia wrote: "These books are very useful for our library, which is visited by hundreds of doctors daily."<sup>63</sup> In May 1966, doctors were the largest single group of respondents from Bulgaria, acknowledging 26 books and requesting subscriptions to the French magazine *La Revue médicale* (Medical review) and to German medical reviews. A doctor wrote that he was now living in West Germany but had written his mother in Sofia asking her to give *Was gibt es Neues in der Medizin?* (What's new in medicine?) to a German-speaking colleague.<sup>64</sup> Doctors remained the largest single group of individuals throughout 1967, with many responses to the subscription offer to medical journals. In the first two months of the year, 15 more requests arrived for subscriptions to the *Revue Médicale*, totaling 60 responses in reply to the offer sent to 75 doctors. There were six requests for the *Almanach für die Ärztliche Fortbildung* (Advance training for doctors), and two requests for renewals of subscriptions to *Medizinische Wochenschrift* (Medical weekly).<sup>65</sup> There was a good response to the offer of a year's subscription to *Fortschritte der Medizin* (Advances in medicine) sent to 35 doctors, and requests were received from 16 of them.<sup>66</sup>

In May and June 1967, 48 letters arrived from doctors and psychologists acknowledging 50 books, including 43 requests for 53 books. Twelve doctors acknowledged the receipt of a sample copy of *Medizinische Monatschrift* (Medical monthly), and asked for a year's subscription. Another dozen took up the offer of a year's subscription to the monthly *Universitas*. 25 copies of *Almanach für Neurologie und Psychopatologie* (Almanach for neurology and psychopathology) were mailed offering a year's subscription, which elicited 15 replies requesting

<sup>62</sup> March [1964] Highlights, dated April 8, 1964, 2. The magazine was regularly received in Bulgaria, and virtually all addressees were more than eager to continue receiving it.

<sup>63</sup> November [1965] Highlights, dated December 21, 1965, 9.

<sup>64</sup> May [1966] Highlights, dated June 13, 1966, 11.

<sup>65</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1967, dated March 17, 1967, 11.

<sup>66</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1967, dated May 10, 1967, 12.

the subscription.<sup>67</sup> The *Almanach für Neurologie und Psychiatrie* 1967 was mailed to 25 doctors, eliciting 14 acknowledgements. Medical yearbooks continued to be in demand.<sup>68</sup> *Was gibt es Neues in der Medizin?*, the 1965–1966 yearbook published by the Schlutersche Verlagsanstalt in Hannover, was mailed to 80 doctors, 56 of whom acknowledged its receipt.<sup>69</sup> French medical journals were a great success. A female doctor in Burgas asked to receive *La Revue de médecine*.<sup>70</sup> Out of 30 offers made as a result, 27 doctors requested a year's subscription to the journal. There were six requests for a renewal of subscriptions to *Journal de médecine de Paris* (Paris journal of medicine), and more were expected to arrive.<sup>71</sup> The medical liaison officer of the Winthrop Products Company's Eastern European Division wrote from England asking if he might forward to IBF in London the names and addresses of people in the medical profession in Eastern Europe, with whom he had come into contact while traveling and who were interested in learning English and all things having to do with England.<sup>72</sup>

Psychiatrists and psychologists were especially eager to receive Western literature in their field. A doctor at the Psychiatric Hospital in Biela (Rusenski Okrug) wrote: "Unfortunately one cannot find such books here. That is why I would be very grateful if you would be kind enough to send me some books on these subjects."<sup>73</sup> The director of a psychiatric hospital in Bela asked for books on psychiatry and psychology because they would be "very helpful to me as a psychiatrist and it's very difficult to receive [obtain] the books here."<sup>74</sup>

*Art.* Many requests for books on art, art museums, and art dictionaries were received. A Bulgarian artist and critic requested books to use in preparation of a series of lectures on Daumier.<sup>75</sup> Galerie Lambert received a touching and sincere letter from a designer of theatrical cos-

<sup>67</sup> Highlights Report July–August 1967, dated September 10, 1967, 10.

<sup>68</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1967, dated November 10, 1967, 13.

<sup>69</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1968, dated March 14, 1968, 20.

<sup>70</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1968, dated May 12, 1968, 16.

<sup>71</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1968, dated November 11, 1968, 25.

<sup>72</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1969, dated May 12, 1969, 27.

<sup>73</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1967, dated July 18, 1967, 13.

<sup>74</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1969, dated May 12, 1969, 27.

<sup>75</sup> July [1963] Highlights, dated August 7, 1963, 2.

tumes who also worked in interior design and graphic art, and who made graphics for the Bulgarian pavilions at the Plovdiv Fair and fairs abroad. He asked for books on contemporary plastic arts and architecture, and concluded: "It is not possible for me to repay you for this enormous service since it is impossible to obtain foreign currency. I can suggest only that I could make the graphic designs for the covers of some books of a publishing house with which you have contacts."<sup>76</sup> Three major libraries acceded to a request for comments on Michel Seuphor's *Peinture abstraite* (Abstract painting). Their comments were surprisingly enthusiastic despite the fact that the official position disapproved of abstract art. The Kiril and Method National Library in Sofia wrote: "It is difficult to say what one admires most—the printing, the binding, or the perfect reproduction of the compositions. As to the literary and scientific value of Seuphor's book, it is undoubtedly a work of major importance containing everything one should know about abstract painting." The Director of the University Library of Varna said: "But if this work has captivated us, [if] despite our Marxist creed it has fascinated us, it is undoubtedly due to the merit of the great publishing house Flammarion." The comment of the University Library of Sofia was somewhat more cautious, but still complimentary: "The work is of striking interest and we will immediately call it to the attention of our readers. Since abstract painting does not exist in Bulgaria, we cannot make critical comments on the book. Nevertheless, it seems to us that a more profound introduction on the social value of this branch of painting would have been very desirable."<sup>77</sup>

About half of the letters in April 1965 were addressed to the Galerie Lambert in Paris, containing many requests for books on art and architecture as well as for the Galerie's catalogue of art exhibitions. The Cyril and Methodius National Library wrote a long letter to the Galerie proposing an exchange of books. Few individuals dared to request books on abstract or surrealist art, but some requests arrived from institutions such as the Academy of Sciences and the Union of Bulgarian Writers. A painter in Sofia asked for a book on abstract art and, perhaps to protect himself, wrote: "My art is realistic for I am

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<sup>76</sup> December [1964] Highlights, dated January 11, 1965, 9.

<sup>77</sup> All quotes are from the March [1965] Highlights, dated April 5, 1965, 9.

profoundly convinced that art which is real and full of truth is necessary in society. In Bulgaria, the method of realism is the fundamental method of all arts." He concluded that in April, he would be in Paris, and "I will have the pleasure of showing some of my paintings."<sup>78</sup> For the first time, the Director of the National Gallery of Art thanked for *The Washington National Gallery* by Barnett Newman.<sup>79</sup> In addition, many doctors were eager to receive books on literature and art. 68 acknowledgements were received for 100 sets of five paperbacks on Degas, Soutine, Boccioni, Bonnard, and Kokoschka, and of the 100 copies mailed of a book on Braque, 56 were acknowledged.<sup>80</sup>

*Architecture.* The mailing of single copies of German architectural magazines with an offer of a year's subscription to architects and engineers was successful. At first, only a few acknowledgements of renewal of subscriptions to the German architectural magazine *Besser Wohnen* (Better living) arrived.<sup>81</sup> A letter from a female architect seemed to indicate that the regime might even encourage professional people to obtain books in their specializations from outside sources. She wrote: "Notwithstanding my long efforts to get your magazine on architecture [*Baumeister*] unofficially, I did not succeed. Then indications were officially given to me that thanks to some voluntary help given to some circles of specialists, the reception of the magazine is possible [...] I beg you sincerely to include my name in the number of architects-specialists helped out from abroad."<sup>82</sup> Two official government agencies, the Economic Enterprise for Building Homes and the Regional Draftsmen Organization, both in Burgas, requested a renewal of their subscriptions to *Baumeister*. Usually such requests were made through libraries and not by the government agency itself.<sup>83</sup> The mailing of 50 copies of the magazine *Raum, Architektur und Wohnform* (Space, architecture, and home form) with an offer of a one-year subscription resulted in 31 confirmations and subscription requests.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>78</sup> April [1965] Highlights, dated May 4, 1965, 9.

<sup>79</sup> December [1965] Highlights, dated January 13, 1966, 13.

<sup>80</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1967, dated May 10, 1967, 12.

<sup>81</sup> May [1964] Highlights, dated June 10, 1964, 8.

<sup>82</sup> December [1964] Highlights, dated January 11, 1965, 9.

<sup>83</sup> March [1965] Highlights, dated April 5, 1965, 9.

<sup>84</sup> May [1965] Highlights, dated June 8, 1965, 7.

Almost half of the 50 letters received in October 1965 were acknowledgements for sample copies of German magazines—*Münchener Bauzeitung* (Munich construction journal), *Möbel* (Furniture), *Raum*, *Architektur und Wohnform*, and *Innendekoration* (Interior decoration)—with requests for a year's subscription. A Sofia engineer who received a sample copy of *Möbel und Raum* (Furniture and space) wrote that he was being sent to work in Cottbus, East Germany, for one year. He asked if the magazine could be sent to him there, and if not, whether the sponsor would continue to send it to his wife in Sofia.<sup>85</sup> A number of architects and engineers thanked for a sample copy of *Schweizer Heim* (Swiss home) and asked for a one-year subscription.<sup>86</sup> 25 copies of *Neues Bauen in Japan* (New construction in Japan) by Udo Kultermann were sent by registered mail, and all were acknowledged.<sup>87</sup> 27 requests were received for *Deutsche Bauzeitschrift* (German construction journal) and *Raum, Architektur und Wohnform*, and five for *Baumeister*—four of them from government agencies in the provincial towns of Bourgas, Karnobat, Lovech, and Kustendil, and the fifth from a professor at the Technical School of Architects and Engineers in Sofia.<sup>88</sup> Verlag Georg Callway, a PSPD sponsor, returned from the October 1968 Sofia book fair with the names and addresses of 15 architects who wanted “urgently” to subscribe to *Baumeister*. The publisher's representative commented: “One of Bulgaria's largest drafting office always keeps just one copy of a book, but it has to be shared among some 500 architects. You can imagine how hard it is for an individual who wants a look at a book to get hold of it.”<sup>89</sup>

*Politics and international affairs.* Using the New York Public Library as a sponsor, a number of books were sent to Bulgarian libraries. The Cyril and Methodius National Library requested three strongly anti-communist books: *Planification et croissance économique des démocraties populaires* (Planification and economic growth of the people's democracies) by Jan Marczewski, *La grande tentation. Le drame des intellec-*

<sup>85</sup> October [1965] Highlights, dated November 8, 1965, 11.

<sup>86</sup> December [1965] Highlights, dated January 13, 1966, 13.

<sup>87</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1968, dated July 22, 1968, 19.

<sup>88</sup> June [1966] Highlights, dated July 19, 1966, 10.

<sup>89</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1968, dated November 11, 1968, 25.

*tuels dans les démocraties populaires* (The great temptation. The drama of the intellectuals in the people's democracies) by Czesław Miłosz, and *L'Europe des dix pays absents* (The Europe of the ten absent countries), a series of lectures published by Berger-Levrault in 1958. The first two books had been sent some years earlier to the Bulgarian National Library, but were never acknowledged.<sup>90</sup> The trend continued in September, when several libraries requested anti-communist books. The National Library in Sofia selected ten titles from a list of 24, including *Lenin: the Compulsive Revolutionary* by Stefan Possony, and *Theory, Law, and Policy of Soviet Treaties* by Jan Triska. The University Library of Sofia selected *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-Tung* by Stuart Schram, S. N. Eisenstadt's *The Political Systems of Empires*, and the books by Possony and Triska. The University Library of Varna asked for 22 of the 24 titles offered, including Frederick Barghoorn's *Soviet Foreign Propaganda*.<sup>91</sup>

Libraries, through which most of the books sent by PSPD were channeled, accepted an increasing number of political books. These exchanges continued to grow and remain important. Requests were received from libraries for 42 books, including 11 dealing with international affairs and politics and 16 with history, chiefly on the U.S. and Western Europe. The Library of the State University of Sofia requested the strongly anti-communist *How Russia is Ruled* by Merle Fainsod.<sup>92</sup> Eventually, requests came in from a broader range of institutions that included state libraries, government agencies, and cultural institutions. The Karl Marx Economic Institute asked the New York Public Library for books on social change, the American economy, and freedom in the Western world. The Library of the University of Sofia asked for Bocheński's *La philosophie contemporaine en Europe* (Contemporary philosophy in Europe) and Boyd Shafer's *Le nationalisme*. The University Library of Varna asked for Walt W. Rostow's book on economic growth and Pierre Angel's *Edouard Bernstein et l'évolution du socialisme allemand* (Eduard Bernstein and the evolution of German Socialism).<sup>93</sup> Sofia

<sup>90</sup> June [1964] Highlights, dated July 17, 1964, 6.

<sup>91</sup> September [1965] Highlights, dated October 8, 1965, 8.

<sup>92</sup> July [1964] Highlights, dated August 19, 1964, 6. Four libraries asked for a second copy of some of the political books they requested.

<sup>93</sup> January [1965] Highlights, dated February 5, 1965, 9.

University continued to request and acknowledge a great many books. In January and February 1968, it requested 61 books and eight American magazines, including *Twenty Letters to a Friend* by Svetlana Alliluyeva, *International Law* by Charles Fenwick, *Newsweek*, *Vogue*, *The New Yorker*, *National Geographic*, *Orbis*, and *American Sociological Review*.<sup>94</sup>

*Letters of special interest.* Spontaneous letters from Bulgaria were initially rare. One letter arrived from an official at the government tourist agency, who wrote: "By chance I had an opportunity to read your book *Russland im Krieg* [Russia at war] which was a great pleasure for me." He asked for a copy. This was an indication that books were circulating hand-to-hand even in Bulgaria.<sup>95</sup> Two letters to the Galerie Lambert from a psychiatrist in Biala, who had not received a number of books sent to him, were surprising for their vehement denunciation of the communist regime. "The Bulgarian citizen," he wrote, "deprived of liberties and rights, subjected to exploitation unique in human history and to the most bestial tyranny, always hungry and living in tremendous misery, is also completely isolated from the free world."<sup>96</sup> A correspondent apologized for his delayed answer and wrote that he had moved, been demoted from professor to assistant professor, and dismissed as head of the Svishtov Institute of Economics. Nevertheless, he requested further titles and a catalogue.<sup>97</sup> A Bulgarian writer felt that the program had rekindled the light in the "darkened temple" of his existence.<sup>98</sup> A writer in Sofia requested Kafka's *Der Prozess* and *Das Schloss* and wrote: "Franz Kafka was until now *persona non grata* in certain countries, but now he is going to be translated in the USSR. I think that we should introduce him in Bulgaria also. I have two of his novels in Danish and Norwegian. But it is necessary, naturally, that I present the original."<sup>99</sup>

An enthusiastic recipient, who regretted not being able to pay for the books, offered to mail Bulgarian handicrafts or to entertain

<sup>94</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1968, dated March 14, 1968, 20.

<sup>95</sup> June [1966] Highlights, dated July 19, 1966, 11.

<sup>96</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1968, dated March 14, 1968, 19.

<sup>97</sup> July [1963] Highlights, dated August 7, 1963, 3.

<sup>98</sup> July [1963] Highlights, dated August 7, 1963, 1.

<sup>99</sup> November [1965] Highlights, dated December 21, 1965, 10.



the sponsor and his colleagues should they visit Bulgaria. A doctor in a small town was so overjoyed by his good fortune in receiving the *Münchener Medizinischer Wochenschrift* that he could only conclude: "Long live Germany!"<sup>100</sup> A professor of English in the provincial town of Kalofer acknowledged a two-volume *History of the U.S.* and asked for English textbooks. He wrote: "The life we live today, the vicissitudes in life that occurred during the last 25 years, affected the social and political structure of a great part of this continent. Whole communities as well as individuals had to sacrifice their blessings and [I] was also involved in this process. And at times I have really the feeling that I have run upon the rocks."<sup>101</sup>

A writer and translator, in a letter to the Comité d'écrivains et d'éditeurs pour une entr'aide européenne (Committee of Writers and Publishers for European Inter-Aid), a sponsor, stated that "the Committee has friends in Bulgaria and its influence is felt equally in our country."<sup>102</sup> Acknowledgements from important government leaders continued to arrive regularly, usually in the form of registered return receipts, or less frequently in the form of a personal visiting card. Many requests for books about the English language were received, especially from schools and teachers.<sup>103</sup> A spontaneous letter came in from an unnamed government official in Sofia: "I came to learn about your fellowship from a friend of mine and I became very interested in your scheme. Please include me in your fellowship and if possible I would like to take advantage of the free books you offer. The books that interest me the most are those on history, sociology, and psychology."<sup>104</sup> An art critic who received ten art books wrote: "Your generosity permits me to maintain a continuous and direct contact with the evolution of Western thought and art."<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> March [1964] Highlights, dated April 8, 1964, 4.

<sup>101</sup> Highlights Report September–October 1967, dated November 10, 1967, 14.

<sup>102</sup> September [1965] Highlights, dated October 8, 1965, 6.

<sup>103</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1967, dated July 18, 1967, 14. See the list of Prominent Bulgarians.

<sup>104</sup> Highlights Report May–June 1968, dated July 22, 1968, 19.

<sup>105</sup> Highlights Report November–December 1968, dated January 15, 1969, 25.



The principal of a private school of English in Kalofer, to which he and his family had been restricted for political reasons, asked for 14 textbooks. He wrote that he had received a number of textbooks three years earlier, and that they had helped him enormously: "In two weeks, the new school year begins and I am without my favorite Oxford textbooks which I desperately need [...] If I don't get the books in time, my position will grow very difficult and those young folk might give up their learning of the English language."<sup>106</sup> A professor of economics acknowledged nine books and wrote that in each of them "there are things we shall all greatly benefit from. You have done a great service to us and encouraged very much our endeavors to build up something of value both to our work as well as to the work of our students." He then mentioned the fact that books requested by the Karl Marx Higher Institute of Economics were sometimes to be sent to the institute itself and sometimes to the National Library in Sofia. He explained: "The only thing we that we [at the Institute] have to do with the [former] institution is that a close relative of mine works there. Through the National Library books were to be received much quicker and more directly, while at the other address things are rather more complicated. My relative is the one who receives all the books coming to the Loan Service of the library [...] Since all books there come personally addressed, the only ones not addressed by name [which makes things easier] happen to be mine. Nevertheless we managed to receive everything in due time, including books sent [directly] to the institute."<sup>107</sup>

A request that came to London from Sofia commented: "It is not this 'free of charge' that makes your job magnificent; the lack of any other way in obtaining such books is what makes me feel [...] much more obliged to you."<sup>108</sup> There were indications that more people were being reached in Bulgaria's provincial towns. Two spontaneous requests arrived, one of them from a private farmer in Blagoevgrad, a small town in southwest Bulgaria, who asked for a book on "using

<sup>106</sup> Highlights Report December 1969, dated January 7, 1970, 23.

<sup>107</sup> Highlights Report January–February 1970, dated March 10, 1970, 25.

<sup>108</sup> Monthly Report July–August 1971, 29, as quoted in George C. Minden, IAC undated Semi-Annual Report on Book Distribution, July 1 to December 31, 1971, 4. HIA, George Minden Collection, Box 1.

mechanization in poultry breeding.”<sup>109</sup> Letters of requests received in the second half of 1969 made it clear that the mailing project had become known not only in Sofia and in the main cities and universities, but also in the provinces. A correspondent from Haskovo, the capital of Haskovo oblast in southeast Bulgaria, asked for four books in English, and another, from the coast resort of Slanchev Briag in Varna oblast, asked for books on fine arts and travel guides to Western Europe.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Highlights Report March–April 1968, dated May 16, 1968, 16.

<sup>110</sup> Highlights Report October 1969, dated November 7, 1969, 22.



## CHAPTER 19

# The Last Seventeen Years

*International Literary Centre, Ltd.,  
East Europe, and the USSR*

There is evidence that the involvement of Free Europe's Radio Liberty in the book mailings to the Soviet Union was preceded by a similar project undertaken by the American Committee for Liberation from Bolshevism (AMCOMLIB), an organization set up in January 1951 with financial support from the CIA to deal with Russian refugees and émigrés. *Reader's Digest* editor Eugene Lyons was its first president. After undergoing a series of name changes, in January 1964 it became the Radio Liberty Committee, Inc. (RLC), with radio broadcasts to the Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup> Between January 1, 1960 and April 30, 1961, AMCOMLIB also sent 2,000 books to the USSR through Ethel Schroeder, at a cost of \$18,000.<sup>2</sup>

The following year, FEC suggested mailing through "well-dispersed assets" from various European cities, particularly in Italy, selected translated material from Albanian, East European, and Chinese sources to the USSR, in addition to Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. For this special project, it submitted a list of roughly

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<sup>1</sup> For a good account of the origins of AMCOMLIB, see Ross Johnson, *Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty. The CIA Years and Beyond*, 26–9. Eventual financial support from U.S. Government funds for Radio Liberty would amount to \$160 million.

<sup>2</sup> EC memo to [FEC] President dated May 5, 1961. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Box 32. Richardson had become interested in AMCOMLIB's book mailings to the USSR and was in favor of FEC taking the operation back, noting that it was already mailing books to the three Baltic republics and handing out books to visiting Russian scientists in New York.

1,400 potential targets—government, communist party, and economic and trade unions leaders—and asked the CIA to supply the names and addresses of relevant Soviet leaders. At the same time, FEC recognized that the inclusion of the USSR “raises a question of ‘jurisdiction’ which you will have to clear with other elements.”<sup>3</sup> A year later, AMCOMLIB informed the FEC President that it had circulated 500 copies of a pamphlet entitled “ABC-Austria” in Russia, and wanted to know whether Radio Free Europe or FEC had knowledge of anyone else distributing similar pamphlets to other captive nations. FEC’s response was that it did not want to duplicate the activity of any other organization.<sup>4</sup>

RLC’s main aim was to promote a united organization of Russian and non-Russian émigrés to carry out radio broadcasting and other anti-communist activities. Isaac (Ike) Patch, a former U.S. diplomat in Moscow during World War II, became RLC’s director of émigré relations in Munich. While he failed in bringing Russians and non-Russians together in a single committee, he was able to recruit people for the various Radio Liberty desks. In 1956, Patch was transferred to RLC headquarters in New York as head of the Special Projects Division, which published a newspaper and a quarterly for the Russian émigré community. Radio Liberty’s aim was basically the same as that of Free Europe’s book program, namely to communicate Western ideas to Soviet citizens by providing them with books on politics, religion, philosophy, and art, denied to them by Soviet dictatorship

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<sup>3</sup> Letters from the President [FEC] to the Executive Committee dated July 9, 1962, July 23, 1962, and July 24, 1962, 1–2, plus a list of 13 selected Albanian and Soviet statements and articles. Ibid. Sam Walker, who maintained direct contact with both FEC and AMCOMLIB’s Ike Patch, also asked George Minden for Hungarian, Czechoslovak, Polish, and Soviet lists, which contained 800 names each. Letters from John Dunning to Sam Walker, August 2, 1962, and to John Page, dated August 21, 1961. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Letter from John Richardson, Jr. to Mucio Delgado dated June 20, 1963. Delgado was the head of the London office of Free Europe Divisions, Inc. A December 1965 exchange of letters between the Executive Committee and the FEC President about the PSPD distribution program makes no mention of any mailings to the USSR. Sometime during the first three months of 1963, Minden’s PSPD sent 2,000 copies of an unspecified number of titles to the USSR, probably the last instance of such a mailing. PSPD Mailing Operations, Monthly Report No. 81, April 1963, 1. HIA, RFE/RL Corporate Records, Microfiche Provisional Box 3.

and censorship. Its director Howland Sergeant approached the CIA, which liked the concept and provided an initial grant of \$10,000, which later rose to a budget of over \$1 million. Radio Liberty set up a non-profit venture, the Bedford Publishing Company, operating with CIA funding, to publish Western literary works that had never been translated into Russian. Bedford's main office was in New York, with branches in London, Paris, Munich, Rome, and Stockholm. It found translators in France and in England, while publishing costs were cheaper in Italy. All distribution centers gave out books to Soviet visitors or provided Western scholars, journalists, and students traveling to the Soviet Union with books. According to Patch, over a period of fourteen years Bedford distributed "well over a million books to Soviet readers in the USSR" from the U.S. and Western Europe. Without providing any detailed statistics on the books sent and the acknowledgements received, Patch reported that 35% of the books were given to Soviet travelers to the West (engineers, teachers, artists, journalists, and students), and 40% to Western travelers to the Soviet Union. 10% were mailed to people authorized to receive book packages from the West, and 15% reached the USSR by "special routes," including the use of diplomatic pouches. Patch found no evidence that the Soviet government made any concerted attempt to disrupt the program, and believed that, with a few exceptions, most books reached their destination. The book program was highly regarded by both the U.S. State Department and the CIA. As Patch put it: "Those of us working on the Program were thrilled to think that those hundreds of books perhaps helped to broaden Soviet minds and horizons toward democracy and western economic ideas."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Patch, *Closing the Circle. A Buckalino Journey Around Our Time*, 255–63. In the absence of any progress reports and statistical data in the RFE/RL Corporate Records, it is not possible to document and verify Patch's figures. In his book, he gives only the names of his distributors, mentions Bedford's yearly conferences in Europe, and his meeting in New York with Stalin's daughter Svetlana and Solzhenitsyn's wife Natasha, with the latter telling him that she and her husband regularly received books supplied by Bedford through an intermediary. See also Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War*, 136–9. Bedford also gets a brief mention in Sosin, *Sparks of Liberty*, 282, fn. 10. After the war, Isaac Patch (1912–) served as a career diplomat in Prague and was expelled from Czechoslovakia on a 24-hour notice

Patch resigned in 1972, the year the CIA stopped funding RFE and RL and the two radios came under U.S. Congressional funding, and eventually merged in 1976. Following a major reorganization at the suggestion of the CIA, on June 30, 1975, Minden—who had regular contacts with Patch throughout the 1960s—inherited the parallel secret Russian book program of Radio Liberty. Through the consolidation of IAC and the Bedford Publishing Company, he became the overall manager of both the East European and the Russian book projects—a sign that he was highly trusted and judged competent by the CIA.<sup>6</sup> His organization took the name of International Literary Centre, Ltd. (ILC), and took over some of Radio Liberty's Bedford book distributors such as Joan Balcar in London, Helene Zwerdling in New York, Anita Rutchenko and Kiril Eltchaninoff in Paris, and Carol Boren, Ingeborg Casavecchia, and Ombretta Orlandini in Rome, plus a fair number of Italian and Russian émigré distributors and publishers in Italy, France, West Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and Sweden. Minden took over the Rome-based Associazione Letteraria Italiana (ALI), a Radio Liberty-funded “sponsor” which sent books to the USSR, and gradually changed its Italian character into an American one. Three Russian staff members of the Russian book project in Europe and one employee of the Radio Liberty New York office also joined Minden's ILC staff.<sup>7</sup> ILC continued to be financed by the CIA through the Association Internationale de Planning, S.A., incorporated in Liberia.

Unfortunately, like those of Bedford, all of ILC's bi-monthly, semi-annual, and annual reports and related correspondence remain

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in October 1949 for alleged involvement in anti-communist activities. He turned 100 on June 20, 2012. Howland Sergeant (1912–1984), a former U.S. diplomat, headed RL from 1954 to 1975. The RL corporate records were apparently destroyed at the time of the 1996 merger with RL. Presumably the CIA would have the richest set of material on RL, but these need to be declassified. Anatol Shmelev to Maciej Siekierski, September 10, 2012.

<sup>6</sup> In an unsigned memo dated July 25, 1975, Minden was asked by someone in Washington D.C. to identify himself as “Dr. George” when making collect calls to their office. Courtesy of Marilyn Minden.

<sup>7</sup> Two of them, Veronika Stein and Potapov (first name unknown) were Russians, and still working with ILC in New York in the mid-1980s. One of them came from Stockholm. Zdena Horak to the author, August 24, 2012. IAC was retained as one of Minden's foreign corporations.

unavailable to this day. Even if Minden did destroy these files when the book project was terminated in 1991, he regularly forwarded his reports to Washington, and these are probably preserved in some U.S. government storage room. In the summer of 1974, all of the existing IAC, now ILC, book distributors in Western Europe, including Polish veterans Andrzej Stypułkowski, Jerzy Kulczycki, Kazimierz Romanowicz, Zygmunt Kallenbach, Witold Zahorski, and Stanisław Morawski, were introduced to Bedford's cover organizations and also tasked to distribute books and periodicals to visiting Russian individuals and delegations, along with a fair number of Russian book distributors in key cities. Earlier veterans from PSPD times, such as Daisy Finney in London, Martine Servot in Paris, and Erna Dobler in Munich, were terminated. The main distribution points remained the same as before: London, Paris, Rome, Vienna, Munich, Stockholm, and Helsinki. Soviets in the U.S. on business or visiting for commercial reasons were also targeted. In addition, Minden inherited a number of special "pouch projects," targeting various Soviet occupational groups through a number of Western embassies and consulates in the USSR.

A handful of brief memos, probably originating from Washington, indicate that throughout the 1980s Minden paid very close attention to Western and émigré books and periodicals published about Russia and suitable for distribution either in the original language or in Russian translation. In late 1980, he was informed that "the long-range outlook" was "still bleak," and that he could not expect any change in his current budget until the following spring.<sup>8</sup>

The 1975 signing of the Helsinki Final Act and its provisions on human rights prompted the new Carter administration and its National Security Council advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski to mount in 1977 an ambitious covert action program going beyond Eastern Europe and challenging for the first time the legitimacy of the Soviet system. This was to be achieved by promoting human rights, supporting Russian dissidents and human rights groups, increasing the covert distribution of Russian-language books and periodicals by

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<sup>8</sup> Letter from BD to G[eorge] M[inden] dated September 24, 1980, 1. Courtesy of Marilyn Minden. ILC also received occasional lists of names and book titles, as well as extra deposits with strings attached, such as using the money to expand the Central Asian readership.



Soviet *samizdat* authors, and expanding book-publishing programs also involving Polish and Czech émigré journals. The Soviet targets also included Ukraine, Central Asia, and other ethnic regions of the USSR. The latter objective was controversial in the Department of State, always nervous about covert activities, and even in the CIA, which avoided direct support for or contact with Soviet dissidents. Although both managed to whittle down part of Carter's and Brzezinski's ambitious covert action program, the amount of Western and dissident publications smuggled into Eastern Europe and the USSR increased considerably.<sup>9</sup>

Poland was the first East European country to feel the consequences of the Helsinki Final Act, with the founding in 1976 of the Movement in Defense of Human and Citizen Rights and of the Committee of Defense of Workers (KOR), and ultimately in 1980 of Solidarność, the Eastern bloc's first independent trade union. Lane Kirkland, AFL-CIO president from 1979 to 1995, gave support to Polish trade unionists and to Solidarity, but was asked by the DOS to keep a low profile. On its part, prompted by Carter and Brzezinski, the CIA started covert activities in support of Polish dissidents, and later worked through intermediaries with Solidarity. Soon the free trade union had yet another supporter, the Polish Pope and the Vatican, and money from various private sources all helped Solidarity survive.

A memorandum by a senior National Security Council official stressed the need to do more to support dissidence in Eastern Europe and the USSR. "These [book and publication] programs were at a low ebb in 1977 [...] They have received modest increases each of the past four years but are still, at a total expenditure of less than \$5 million

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<sup>9</sup> Gates, *From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insider's Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War*, 89–96. On Poland and Solidarity, 226–39. Smuggled literature was to be about freedom and democracy, the history and culture of the ethnic minorities of the USSR, and also included Solzhenitzyn's *The Gulag Archipelago*. The secret activities of Minden's ILC organization are not mentioned in Gates's book, but were in total conformity with covert CIA policies under the Carter and Reagan administrations. Robert Gates (1943–) joined the CIA in 1966 and worked for 26 years with the Agency, and between 1974 to 1979 for the NSC. He became CIA deputy director in 1982–1987 and CIA director in 1991–1992, and served as Secretary of Defense from 2006 to 2011.

per year, funded at levels which do not enable them to exploit the new opportunities for penetrating the Communist world with ideas and information which are constantly developing.” Among a series of recommendations, the author suggested expanding the publication and distribution operations through modest increments of funds to raise their level of efficiency, developing a tape-cassette distribution program, distributing more *samizdat* and *tamizdat* literature, better serving the Baltic States, especially the Lithuanians, the Ukrainians, and the Caucasus and Muslim people, and giving higher priority to religion, especially Orthodox tradition in Ukraine and among Russians.<sup>10</sup>

In an undated one-page summary for the fiscal year 1982, Minden gave the following figures, with the remark “need same for 1983”: Soviet Union: 155,000 books and journals, 345,000 copies of Russian newspapers, 40,000 copies of Ukrainian journals; Poland: 66,000 books and journals, 96,000 copies of a single journal, 36,000 copies of 18 books published and distributed; Czechoslovakia: 21,500 books and journals, 57,000 copies of two journals; Hungary: 18,300 books and journals, 18,000 copies of one literary journal; Romania: 13,500 books and journals; Bulgaria: 5,000 books and journals; giving a total of 871,300 books and journals and a projected cost of \$278,868 for the fiscal year 1983—\$128,996 for the USSR, \$75,624 for Poland, and the rest for the other four East European target countries.<sup>11</sup> Minden’s Polish national editor, Adam Rudzki, and Kultura publisher and editor Jerzy Giedroyc in Paris were particularly unhappy about this shift of emphasis from Eastern Europe to the Soviet Union, mainly at the

<sup>10</sup> National Security Council memorandum from Paul B. Henze to Zbigniew Brzezinski dated April 17, 1980, 1–4. Declassified document E.O. 12958, Sec.3.6., per 2/4/99 NSC, Nars Date 2/24/99, National Archives, College Park, MD. Zbigniew Brzezinski (1928–) earned a Ph.D. at Harvard, taught at Columbia University from 1960 to 1989, and served as advisor to several U.S. presidents and as National Security Advisor to President Jimmy Carter. He played a key role in the planning of many FEC programs, and his books were widely mailed and handed out in the frame of Minden’s book project. Paul B. Henze (1924–2011), a long-time CIA and NSC specialist in psychological operations, was deputy to Brzezinski at the National Security Council.

<sup>11</sup> Soviet/East European Literature Distribution Program FY 1982. HIA, George Minden Collection, Box 3.

expense of the various Polish projects, especially during the Solidarity and martial law years of 1980 and 1981 in Poland.<sup>12</sup>

This is sufficient evidence to conclude that by that time, Minden's book distribution program was giving priority to the USSR, a trend that began with IAC's merger with Bedford and gained momentum after the Helsinki Accords of 1975 under the successive Carter and Reagan administrations. President Ronald Reagan and his new CIA director William Casey pursued Carter's aggressive East European and Russian covert activities and further expanded them after the December 1981 imposition of martial law in Poland and the Soviet crackdown on Russian dissidents.<sup>13</sup> This may also explain why all post-July 1973 reports are missing from the Hoover Institution Archives, due to their sensitive nature and contents, and the CIA's aid to Solidarity remains one of the agency's best kept secrets.<sup>14</sup> In 2005,

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<sup>12</sup> Jerzy Giedroyc asked Jan Nowak-Jeziorański, the influential head of the RFE's Polish Desk, to intercede with Brzezinski, who was instrumental in attaining an increase in the ILC budget for publishing and sending books. Letter from Marek Rudzki to the author dated August 30, 2010. See also his article "Akcja masowych przekazów książek do Polski w latach 1956–1944" ["Action of Mass Transfers of Books to Poland in the Years 1956–1994"], *Zeszyty Historyczne*, no. 134, 217–24, Instytut Literacki, Paris. Brzezinski received many requests for assistance from Poles and West European liberals alike. Sometime in 1981, he mentioned to Casey that a worthwhile Polish project needed \$18,000. The next day, a briefcase with the exact amount in cash was brought to his office. He took the briefcase and gave it to a Pole associated with the project who took it back to Europe. Cited from Gates, 238.

<sup>13</sup> On Reagan and Casey, see Gates, *From the Shadows*, 198–225. For Casey, covert action against the Soviet Union was a policy objective in the absence of a viable overt option. Books were covertly supplied to underground libraries and Catholic schools in Poland and support was given to Solidarność *samizdat* literature. William Casey (1913–1987) worked in World War II with the OSS and was CIA director from 1981 to 1987.

<sup>14</sup> On American and other Western overt and covert financial and technical aid to Solidarity, from printing equipment to electronic devices, see Benjamin B. Fischer, "Solidarity, the CIA, and Western Technology," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Issue 25/2012, 427–49. On *Kultura*, Giedroyc, and Solidarity, 440–42. The AFL-CIO spent over \$4 million and the CIA an estimated \$10 to \$50 million in supporting Solidarity, with about \$8 million in 1982–1983 alone. None of these figures can be verified and the actual amount remains classified. Fischer (1945–), a historian, worked for nearly 30 years for the CIA.

Ludmilla Thorne, a former employee of the ILC book program, wrote a letter to *The New Yorker* in which she acknowledged that the CIA had financed it. She mentioned the program's ingenuity, with members of the Moscow Philharmonic slipping book pages into their sheet music, and a young woman flying from London to Moscow with her infant son squeezing a mini-edition of Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* into the child's diaper.<sup>15</sup> Such activities and projects were certainly not without risks. The Soviet KGB was well aware of the ongoing increase in domestic dissent and unrest in the 1970s and early 1980s, and concluded that it was due primarily to an increased effort by the United States and its allies to promote internal instability within the USSR. It responded with a tighter screening of foreigners, harsher penalties for anti-Soviet literature, and stricter monitoring of the activities of immigrants, church officials, and authors of *samizdat* literature.

In a 1991 memorandum, Minden gave a short description of the structure and activities of International Literary Centre, Inc. According to Minden, the total number of books and periodicals distributed for roughly 35 years to five East European countries and for some 30 years to the Soviet Union amounted to close to ten million. In the last few years, the distribution was close to 300,000 per year, with 55% of the books going to the USSR and the rest to Eastern Europe. Minden noted that all the books scheduled since January 1971 were available for consultation in New York, and that a complete index by both title and author was kept up-to-date in the ILC central office, together with the names of practically all the people who had taken books. The combined Soviet-East European distribution for the fiscal year 1990 was 316,020. The report described ILC's modest personnel of nine, three of them part-time, and their respective functions. ILC's budget for 1990 was \$2,720,677, with \$1,850,900 spent on books, mailing, and handling, and a price of \$8.60 per unit distributed, including overhead. For a full understanding of the program, Minden recommended reading the daily reports on the New York distribution program to

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<sup>15</sup> Ludmilla Thorne, "Covert Art," Letter to the Editor, *The New Yorker*, November 21, 2005. Courtesy of A. Ross Johnson. After leaving Bedford, Ludmilla Zemels Thorne (1938–2009) joined Freedom House and became a journalist and prominent human rights activist, promoting the views and writings of A. Solzhenitsyn, A. Sakharov, and V. Bukovsky.

Soviet recipients, the monthly reports from distributors in the field, the six-monthly charts with the names of recipients and titles of books taken, his six-monthly reports from Europe, the schedules describing the books selected for distribution, the purchase orders for books commissioned for translation, the monthly and quarterly accounting reports of expenses, and the letters of request and acknowledgement from recipients. With one single exception, all these reports are missing from the Minden Collection at the Hoover Institution Archives. Minden's long-time lawyer in New York has not retained them.<sup>16</sup>

A notable exception is the existence of Minden's semi-annual European inspection trip reports, prepared when he personally met his many book distributors, publishers, and sponsors. Covering the period July 1973 to December 1990, these reports shed some, but not the full, light on the growing importance of the book distribution program now also targeting visitors from the Soviet Union. During that period, Minden made a total of 23 trips to Europe, with regular stops in London, Paris, Rome, Munich, Geneva, Lausanne, and Vienna. The length of his reports ranges from seven to nine pages, to 49 to 59 pages in 1965, with the last two reports from 1990 22 and 10 pages respectively—a total of 517 pages.

Despite the lack of precise reports and statistics, the trip reports provide valuable information about Minden's untiring efforts to expand his book distribution activities in Spain and the Canary Islands, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Greece, and later Canada, Israel, Pakistan, India, and Australia. Nothing could be distributed in Turkey because the Turks did not want to antagonize the Russians. Minden learned that the best way of reaching the USSR, where censorship was worse, was through Eastern Europe, namely Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia (to vacationing Soviets), and especially Bulgaria. Starting in 1978, he made contacts with Ukrainians, Baltics, Georgians, Armenians,

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<sup>16</sup> George C. Minden, President, ILC, "A Short Description of Its Structure and Activities (undated)," 1–2. HIA, George Minden Collection, Box 3. Letter from Gerard H. Davis to the author dated March 31, 2008. The report sheds no light on some of the organizations overseen until 1991 by the ILC, such as ALI, CIL, and UBEX, whose acronyms at times appear in Minden's European trip reports. The very security-conscious Minden probably also destroyed his entire personal correspondence.

Central Asians, and other non-Russian dissidents except Turkic people and other Muslims. To smuggle Western and émigré literature inside East Europe and the Soviet Union, Minden and his distributors were helped by an amazing variety of book takers: Russian émigrés, Italian, French, and Polish priests, German, French, and Austrian students, Russian Orthodox priests, American and Austrian professors and businessmen, French scientists, Polish sport yachts, taxi drivers, German building companies, Polish, Austrian, and Swedish tourists, an Italian congressman, Russian wives of Czech intellectuals living in Paris, Russian truck drivers, London Poles and Polish officers who served with the Allied forces and retired in Poland, Russian wives of Western diplomats, and a fair number of Spanish, American, French, Finnish, Belgian, and Austrian diplomats.<sup>17</sup> A few book carriers were caught but most of them got through. Czech customs officers were under orders to thoroughly search Polish travelers on buses and trains, leaving no time to search Czechs and Germans. Books were distributed to Russian soldiers in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, Russian prisoners in Afghanistan via Pakistan (this was discontinued in 1985), roughly 2,000 Russian wives in Czechoslovakia, and given in British, French, German, Belgian, and Italian ports to Polish and Soviet sailors who wrapped them in plastic or hid them in paint cans. Small format books on thin Bible paper were also hidden in Tampax boxes, food cans, and sugar packages. One distributor was interrogated by Spanish policemen in Las Palmas, Canary Islands, but managed to distribute 500 books to Soviet sailors. Another was declared *persona non grata* and yet another in Tenerife had two ribs broken by a Soviet seaman who did not want books. Books were distributed on Danube ships in Vienna and on the Czech trains waiting to be loaded in Germany.

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<sup>17</sup> The Austrian government was not willing to distribute books openly to Soviet and East European visitors and did it only through its embassy and other official Austrian cultural institutions in Eastern Europe and the USSR, this up to 1990. In 1984, an Austrian book shipment destined to Ulan Bator landed instead in Tiflis, providing a new distribution point in Georgia. In 1988, the Russian playwright Yuri Ginsburg, a protégé of Mrs. Gorbachev, offered to take some of the Austrian Embassy's books by car to places he visited outside Moscow. Peter Straka to George Minden, October 30, 1984, and October 31, 1988. See also Chapter 13 on Vienna.

The Polish Library in London was the central and largest Polish distribution point and in 1983 had a stock of 10,000 books. The Polish Center in London had very close contacts with Lech Walesa, and Minden's Polish distributor in Rome had access to the Pope through his secretary and gave to him all the Polish books the Pope wanted to have. By 1983, the Vatican became overly cautious about political books and the Roman clergy did not encourage too aggressive a book distribution approach to Polish pilgrims. The U.S. Ambassador in Rome was against covert book distribution in Italy. In 1984, 80 Kultura books were sent to Poland in plastic bags via the Baltic Sea. Bulgarian books and periodicals were placed in each German car exported to Bulgaria. Books were sent to Polish technicians in Iraq, Iran, Morocco, and Libya. Minden also set up two bookstores in Munich to give out books to Russian and Ukrainian visitors, and a Polish bookstore in Vienna. Small-format Bibles were distributed to Russians in Budapest and many more smuggled through Finland to Russia, which led the Soviets to clamp down on Bibles and on any book distribution project based in Finland. In the 1980s, Minden tried to use truck drivers who drove back to the Soviet Union via Iran and Central Asia, and Central Asians working for RFE in Munich. Russian publishing and distribution centers were opened in Rome and Paris. In 1983, Minden expressed his happiness with the arrangements for cooperation established with the new Polish émigré activists and with a new publication, *Zeszyty Literackie*, edited by Barbara Toruńczyk in Paris, and encouraged them to publish more first class books and magazines in Russian, Polish, and Czech. Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian books were sent through Switzerland. Throughout the 1980s, the Czech distributors Pavel Tigrid in Paris, Zdeněk Mastník, Alexander Tomský, and Jan Kavan in London, and Jiří Pelikán in Rome continued to publish exile literature, mail and hand out books to all East European and Russian visitors, and smuggle literature into Czechoslovakia. By 1990, London, Paris, Rome, and Vienna were submerged by Russian visitors while East European visitors showed little interest in Russian books.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Selected and condensed selected information obtained from Minden's European trip reports from summer 1973 to winter 1988. George Minden, "Notes from Europe." HIA, George Minden Collection, Box 2 and 3.



Minden's trip reports contain a day-to-day record of his meetings and talks with his many Polish, Czechoslovak, Hungarian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Austrian, German, Swiss, Italian, and Russian distributors and publishers (the Poles and the Russians were by far the most numerous, followed by the Czechs, the Hungarians, the Romanians, and the Bulgarians) to whom he kept adding new ones throughout the 1980s. In this manner, he was able to judge how reliable and efficient these individuals were. He also cared for many of these people, and showed concern for their health, personal problems, and financial situation. Minden would often arrive unannounced to a given distribution center or bookstore, and personally observe how books and periodicals were distributed to East European visitors. He was keen to know which books and periodicals, later also cassettes and videocassettes, were doing well and which ones were not, and liked to observe visitors browsing through the shelves and choosing books. The main issues discussed were financial ones, involving the publication, translation, or purchasing of a vast array of books in a variety of Western and native languages. A few of the émigrés were not easy to control, and others, some Russians and Poles in particular, gave Minden occasional headaches with their personal problems and quarrels, indiscretions, and mutual denunciations. Yet he always proved to be a good mediator and was able to smooth over intra-émigré tensions and conflicts. He also encouraged Poles and Czechs distributors to work together and met in person many prominent Russian dissidents. There were also problems with rents, working permits and taxes, French, Italian, Austrian, and British postal services and customs, as well as security. Munich and Hamburg were penetrated by the Czech and Polish secret services, which planted many defectors as spies, and Geneva and Vienna were full of Russian spies and East European secret service agents. Most of the individuals involved in the book distribution and publishing program were proud of their engagement and felt united in a common conviction that they were working for a good cause. At times, Minden's personal comments were very perceptive and edifying. He praised efficient work and was critical of poor performance or tardy reporting, and even more of fraud and theft.<sup>19</sup> In the

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<sup>19</sup> Some of the books given out were sold in Western Europe, especially in Germany and Sweden, or ended up in the libraries of Poles living in England or in Rome instead of being taken back to Poland.



case of the ten or so Hungarian book distributors in Western Europe, he had only laudatory comments about them.<sup>20</sup> These reports remain sensitive to this day because of the need to protect the identity of some of those involved. On the whole, it is truly amazing to learn how one single man managed to control this vast and extremely complex multinational book distribution network, encompassing several hundred individuals and organizations in over ten West European countries and beyond.<sup>21</sup>

In 1988, Minden phased out ALI in Rome and between December 1990 and January 1991 he stopped the book distribution in London and Paris to Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Bulgaria, and concentrated on Russian, Romanian, and Albanian distribution. He closed his Geneva, Paris, and Rome offices while the mailing of Russian books continued to the Soviet Union, Moldavia, and Lithuania. 22,000 books were taken by truck to Moscow for the Library of Foreign Literature. A number of Polish émigré distributors-publishers were able to visit their homeland and one held his own book exhibit in Warsaw's Palace of Culture, distributing over 20,000 catalogues. Others were thinking of opening bookstores in Warsaw while they suspected that the Polish government was trying to drive exile publishers out of business. Russian distributors also had ideas of opening bookstores in Moscow.<sup>22</sup>

Between October 1991 and October 1994, Minden remained involved in New York with the International Book Exchange Fund, Inc. (IBEF), a university library exchange and donation program involving the former USSR (Russia, Ukraine, Moldova), and Albania,

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<sup>20</sup> Mátyás Sárközi in London, Zsuzsa and Mátyás Triznya in Rome, the Jesuit Ferenc Szabó in the Vatican, Gyula Sipos, Tibor Méray, and Péter Kende in Paris, József Molnár and János Boór in Munich, Gyula Klamár in Vienna, and László Nagy in Geneva. Roughly 25,000 books went to Hungary every year.

<sup>21</sup> George C. Minden, European Trip Reports from July 1973 through November–December 1990. HIA, George Minden Collection, Box 2. Oddly enough, his previous trip reports starting in 1963 up to 1972 are missing. This author tried to contact a few former Russian book distributors in Paris, but they declined to reply. Another one did not want to be identified. During a period of three decades, Minden saw many of his book distributors and contacts pass away and he often continued working with their widows.

<sup>22</sup> George Minden, "Notes from Europe," June 10–30, 1990, 1–34, and November 17–December 3, 1990, 1–10. HIA, Minden Collection, Box 3.

Bulgaria, and Romania, which after 1992 was managed under the auspices of the U.S. Information Agency. Up to \$1,250 was earmarked for expenses related to the distribution in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe of “books and periodicals on democracy, market economics, law, political processes, management, and related fields.” This represented the last remaining stock of the books used by Minden for his various distribution programs up to 1991.<sup>23</sup>

George Minden submitted his resignation as ILC President in two undated one-sentence letters addressed to the Board of Directors of ILC, Ltd. in New York and to a post-office box in Washington, D.C. In a personal letter to Minden, Walter Raymond, Jr., the former Special Assistant to President George H. Bush for National Security Affairs, expressed sadness at what he called “the end of an era.” He wrote: “On the other hand, you should certainly take a great deal of personal pride in all the valuable quiet work that you were able to do on behalf of the freedom of thought and the expression of independent ideas so desperately sought by millions [...] Once again, George, your commitment to the cause has been exemplary. I believe not just Solzhenitsyn but thousands of others would agree that you made a genuine difference in sustaining a sense of intellectual integrity and keeping the links open to the millions whose principal misfortune was to be located in the eastern rather than western half of Europe.”<sup>24</sup>

Another letter came from the former FEC President, John Richardson, who wrote that he planned to mention Minden and the book project in his forthcoming book.<sup>25</sup> “In the rare moments when

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<sup>23</sup> USIA Book Programs, Annual Report FY 1992, 37. Book Program Division, Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs, United States Information Agency, Washington, D.C. On IBEF, see also chapters 10 and 11 in Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War*. The IBEF files are most likely preserved in the archives of the U.S. State Department, and a request submitted in 2008 by this author under the Freedom of Information Act is still pending.

<sup>24</sup> Letter from Walter Raymond, Jr. to George Minden, dated July 9, 1994. Both letters are courtesy of Marilyn Minden. Walter Raymond Jr. (1929–2003) was a former CIA official, who afterwards worked for Presidents George H. Bush and Ronald Reagan.

<sup>25</sup> This book has now been published under the title: *A New Vision for America: Toward Human Solidarity Through Global Diplomacy - A Memoir*. During his

Free Europe pressures let up enough to permit idle speculation,” he wrote, “I sometimes wondered whether those books in the hands of the intellectual elites of Central and Eastern Europe might not rival or even exceed Radio Free Europe in influencing the course of history [...] Like Free Europe Radio broadcasts, these books for me are analogous to food denied to needy people by their oppressors.” The project was also very much appreciated by Otto von Habsburg, who expressed his “personal thanks for all you have been doing in favor of European freedom [...]” Alexander Solzhenitsyn, himself a distributor after he came to the United States, expressed his gratitude in 1994 by sending Minden a dedicated copy of his book *The Red Wheel: A Narrative in Discrete Periods of Time*.<sup>26</sup>

The complete authentic and fully documented story of the last 17 years of the Minden-managed East European and Russian book programs still remains to be written, preferably by one or more scholars with a special interest in Cold War history and a good knowledge of the events in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union from the mid-1970s on throughout the end of the 1980s. This will be possible only when the necessary files will be located and released by the relevant U.S. government agency, and when the West European and Russian émigré book distributors and book publishers still alive will decide to come forward and write down their personal involvement and activities in the covert book project.

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long tenure at the Department of State as Assistant Secretary for Cultural Relations and Public Affairs (1968–1977), Richardson was again involved with Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union through various exchange programs. In 1970, he personally saw the Alvin Ailey dance company’s landmark performance in Moscow. *Oral History Interview*, February 9, 1999.

<sup>26</sup> Letter from John Richardson to George Minden dated September 26, 2000, and from Otto von Habsburg to George Minden dated December 13, 1965. *Ibid*.

# Conclusion

## *The Impact of the Book Distribution Project and its Contribution to the Ideological Victory of the West*

A U.S. Government official aptly described the power of the book when he stated at a Senate hearing: “Books differ from all other propaganda media, primarily because one single book can significantly change the reader’s attitude and action to an extent unmatched by the impact of any other single media.”<sup>1</sup> A recent U.S. Government document briefly mentions the non-radio programs of Free Europe, Inc. and Radio Liberty, namely their sponsorship of book distribution programs. According to the report, from the late 1950s until 1970 the two organizations distributed a total of two-and-a-half million books and periodicals in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. “The book programs,” the report states, “are, for the most part, demonstrably effective in reaching directly significant segments of the professional and technical elite, and through them their colleagues in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, with material that can inferentially be said to influence attitudes and reinforce predispositions toward intellectual and cultural freedom and dissatisfaction with its absence.”<sup>2</sup> George

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<sup>1</sup> Chief of the CIA’s Covert Action Staff to the Church Committee, in “Foreign and Military Intelligence, Book I. Final Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities, United States Senate Together With Additional Supplemental, and Separate Views,” April 26, 1976, 193 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office).

<sup>2</sup> Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Vol. XII, Soviet Union January 1969–October 1970, 463 (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 2006).

Minden further refined the concept when he wrote: "All book distribution is politically significant because all books—political and literary—accomplish the political task of making the ideological isolation of Eastern Europe difficult and thus frustrate one of the communists' main political objectives. For the communists, too, all Western books, whether political or non-political, are politically significant and feared as such."<sup>3</sup>

In reality, the book project was ideological, political, cultural, and psychological warfare all wrapped up in one, using not pressure or force but enlightenment and persuasion by means of the printed word, with a prime emphasis on culture. Books were meant to reach the minds of the captive people living under oppressive communist regimes by breaking down the ideological and cultural Iron Curtain and by opening wide a window on the culture and achievements of the free Western world. Throughout the many years of the program, it can be said that practically all leading members of the East European intelligentsia, as well as some members of the party and managerial elite, received books and periodicals either through the mail or directly, when visiting the West. Their names figure in the PSPD/IAC statistical reports and include practically all prominent writers, literary critics, philosophers, university professors, sociologists, economists, scientists, journalists, artists and art critics, musicians, bishops and clergymen, and many thousands of teachers and students who were eager to receive and request Western books, dictionaries, and periodicals. All major cultural, scientific, and professional organizations, government and state offices, public libraries, university libraries and faculties, church institutions and seminaries, literary and other magazines, museums, and many schools also received a steady flow of books and magazines, considerably multiplying the number of readers. The result was the receipt, by the thousands, of letters of acknowledgement and/or of request from grateful recipients. Unfortunately, the original letters have not been located and may have been shredded by Minden himself, a private man, to protect the identity of their writers, many of whom are still alive today. Because of their sheer number, there is little

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<sup>3</sup> George C. Minden, "Some Additional Notes on the Current State of Book Distribution," November 10, 1969, 1. HIA, George Minden Collection, Box 1.

hope that these letters have been preserved, with the possible exception of those letters sent to Washington as annexes to Minden's various reports. Fortunately, excerpts from the most interesting letters received between 1963 and 1973 were included in the various reports available in the RFE/RL Corporate Records and preserved.

On the basis of this vast, authentic, and well-documented written evidence, it can be said with absolute certainty that the massive joint American-West European covert book distribution project—which John Matthews aptly called “the West’s secret Marshall Plan for the mind”—had a significant impact and influence on intellectuals, professional people, and thousands of students and youths in Eastern Europe during some four decades of Soviet communist domination. The key role and large contribution of the United States in the launching and the implementation of the book project throughout the Cold War also deserves a tribute. One-and-a-half year after the start of the book mailings, the legendary head of Radio Free Europe’s Polish section, Jan Nowak, cited the words of thanks of a Polish recipient of a scientific book and commented: “This activity deserves tribute not only to the Free Europe Committee, but also to the American people. I am sure that the time will come when this moving story can be told and will gain America the gratitude and appreciation of the Captive Peoples.”<sup>4</sup>

The Cold War can be described as essentially a war of ideas through the political use of culture, and was part of an overall ideological competition between the East and the West. The book project and many other projects were part of the very comprehensive American policy of containment devised by George Kennan to prevent the spread of the Soviet empire beyond Eastern Europe. On the one hand, the U.S. wanted to counter the communist appeal among intellectuals in Western Europe and the Third World, and on the other, to make it more difficult for Moscow to achieve full control over the satellite countries. “While the CIA led the implementation of the government’s

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<sup>4</sup> Letter to Sam Walker from Jan Nowak, December 7, 1957. HIA, Sam Walker Collection, Box 8. Jan Nowak-Jeziorański (1914–2005), writer, journalist, and politician, was head of RFE’s Polish radio section from 1952 until 1976, after which he became advisor to U.S. Presidents Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush, and Billy Carter.

cultural strategy, it was a ‘total’ strategy which involved all agencies of the [U.S.] Executive [...] The operations were part of an integrated strategy [...] To put it bluntly, if the U.S. government had not covertly funded the ‘private’ efforts or in some cases, assisted in their funding through foundations, they could have never existed.”<sup>5</sup>

People in the intelligence community who knew about the book program described it as a huge success and one of the best things the CIA ever did. Minden’s son Paul recalled that his father “was very content with the work he had done. The operation was so complex and demanded such an intricate knowledge of numerous countries, cultures, systems and players, that my father took some pride, quietly, in knowing that his shoes would have been impossible to fill. This was true also in that he was the only one who knew all the players, while others had at the most a piece of the puzzle. He was especially satisfied that he had done it his way.” Early on, Minden told the CIA that if the book project’s aim was to tell people what to think, the West would do no better than the regimes it wanted to undermine. He did not want to feed propaganda to the people of Eastern Europe, but, as Paul said, to “present them with options and give them access to what they wanted. To their credit the CIA saw the wisdom in this and let my father run the operation his way.”<sup>6</sup>

Thanks to the uninterrupted and steady flow of Western books and publications, the total number of which, in Minden’s estimation, certainly must have reached ten million, Western political ideas and

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<sup>5</sup> Scott W. Lucas, “Beyond Freedom, Beyond Control: Approaches to American Culture and the State-Private Network in the Cold War,” in *Intelligence and Security* 18, No. 2 (2003): 53–72. The activities had to be planned and supported so that if disclosed, the U.S. government could plausibly disclaim any responsibility or involvement.

<sup>6</sup> Letters from Paul Minden to the author, October 4 and October 12, 2011. When the CIA told Minden he should stop sending books by Solzhenitsyn, he countered that it was crucial to keep sending the Russian author’s books and convinced the CIA. Solzhenitsyn sent him a personal thank-you note. Ibid. Paul Minden, an educator living in Los Angeles, worked in the ILC mailroom as a student in the 1980s and became fascinated with the world behind the Iron Curtain. He later worked in Romania for two years as a teacher, trainer, and professor of education. His father taught him a love of travel and languages, and to express complex thoughts simply.

western culture, by means of dictionaries and books on languages, art and architecture, sociology, religion and philosophy, economics, management, and farming, history and memoirs, and catalogues, were able to penetrate the cultural Iron Curtain, despite the attempts of the communist postal censors and customs officials to stem the flow. Ultimately, they were forced to admit defeat just like those who tried to jam the radio broadcasts of Radio Free Europe and other Western radio stations. The intellectuals of Eastern Europe were able to break out of their cultural and ideological prison and to remain in touch with their counterparts in the West. In this particular type of psychological and cultural warfare, the ultimate victory belonged to the West, with the fall of the Iron Curtain and the end of the Cold War, a victory in which books played a uniquely decisive role.

In his 1991 memo, Minden wrote: "ILC's operations have never been part of the Cold War. They have always been targeted, information-directed, and tightly controlled."<sup>7</sup> Even so, the CIA-funded, Walker-launched, and Minden-managed book mailing and distribution programs, covering a period of over three decades, played a decisive role, by contributing, together with the radio broadcasts, to the West's ideological victory. They did so at a relatively low financial cost and without any loss of lives. For Minden, who abhorred violence, this must have been a source of great personal satisfaction. While anyone could switch on the radio, jamming permitting, the book project had more selective targets. It will remain an open question which of the two operations made a greater contribution in the struggle for the minds of the captive people of Eastern Europe. But millions of people were affected one way or another by the book project without ever hearing about its existence.

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<sup>7</sup> George C. Minden, President, ILC, "A Short Description of Its Structure and Activities (undated)", 2. HIA, George Minden Collection, Box 3.





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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

|          |                                                                                       |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ABS      | Archív bezpečnostních složek (Security Services Archives)                             |
| AMCOMLIB | American Committee for Liberation (renamed the Radio-Liberty Committee, RLC, in 1964) |
| CBOD     | Communist Bloc Operations Department                                                  |
| CC       | Central Committee                                                                     |
| CIA      | Central Intelligence Agency                                                           |
| EC       | Executive Committee (CIA)                                                             |
| FEC      | Free Europe Committee                                                                 |
| FEP      | Free Europe Press                                                                     |
| FEOP     | Free Europe Organization and Publication Division                                     |
| HIA      | Hoover Institution Archives                                                           |
| HSWP     | Hungarian Socialist Workers Party                                                     |
| IAC      | International Advisory Council                                                        |
| IBC      | International Book Center                                                             |
| IBEF     | International Book Exchange Fund                                                      |
| ICFTU    | International Confederation of Free Trade Unions                                      |
| ILC      | International Literary Centre                                                         |
| KB       | Központi Bizottság (Central Committee)                                                |
| KSČ      | Komunistická Strana Československa (Communist Party of Czechoslovakia)                |
| MOL      | Magyar Országos Levéltár (Hungarian National Archives)                                |
| MSZMP    | Magyar Szocialista Munkás Párt (Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party)                   |
| MSZP     | Magyar Szocialista Párt (Hungarian Socialist Party)                                   |
| NARA     | National Archives and Records Administration                                          |
| NCFE     | National Committee for Free Europe                                                    |
| NSC      | National Security Council                                                             |

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|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| OSS    | Office of Strategic Services                                       |
| OSZK   | Országos Széchenyi Könyvtár (National Széchenyi Library)           |
| PSPD   | Press and Special Projects Division                                |
| P-to-P | Person-to-Person Book Distribution                                 |
| PUWP   | Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza (Polish United Workers Party) |
| RFE    | Radio Free Europe                                                  |
| RL     | Radio Liberty (until 1959, Radio Liberation)                       |
| ŠtB    | Štátna bezpečnosť (State Security)                                 |
| USIA   | U.S. Information Agency                                            |
| WEOD   | West European Operations Division                                  |

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*Number of Books Distributed by PSPD in 1968 and 1967 by Country and by Method of Distribution*

| Country        | Year | Scheduled Books Mailed | Requests Received for Books | Requests Books Mailed* | Books Distributed Pers-to-pers | Books sent as "Personalized" Mailings | Total No. of Books Distributed | Total No. of Letters Received |
|----------------|------|------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Poland         | 1968 | 37,099                 | 10,616                      | 9,024                  | 47,555                         | 1,499                                 | 95,177                         | 11,663                        |
|                | 1967 | 34,517                 | 10,460                      | 8,891                  | 43,658                         | 824                                   | 87,890                         | 12,090                        |
| Czechoslovakia | 1968 | 22,931                 | 30,418                      | 25,855                 | 28,713                         | 1,363                                 | 78,862                         | 24,892                        |
|                | 1967 | 20,721                 | 16,177                      | 13,750                 | 15,369                         | 692                                   | 50,532                         | 14,950                        |
| Hungary        | 1968 | 27,252                 | 7,704                       | 6,548                  | 25,164                         | 474                                   | 59,438                         | 15,060                        |
|                | 1967 | 36,639                 | 12,484                      | 10,611                 | 25,962                         | 200                                   | 73,412                         | 18,882                        |
| Rumania        | 1968 | 30,114                 | 36,226                      | 30,792                 | 2,499                          | 467                                   | 63,872                         | 30,202                        |
|                | 1967 | 21,068                 | 18,397                      | 15,637                 | 1,747                          | 328                                   | 38,780                         | 17,077                        |
| Bulgaria       | 1968 | 19,388                 | 2,380                       | 2,023                  | 4,956                          | 587                                   | 26,954                         | 2,337                         |
|                | 1967 | 16,648                 | 2,010                       | 1,709                  | 367                            | 99                                    | 18,823                         | 2,149                         |
| Estonia        | 1968 | 1,213                  | 18                          | 15                     | —                              | 50                                    | 1,278                          | 24                            |
|                | 1967 | 731                    | 10                          | 9                      | 240                            | —                                     | 980                            | 22                            |
| Latvia         | 1968 | 1,139                  | 1                           | 1                      | 82                             | —                                     | 1,222                          | 126                           |
|                | 1967 | 858                    | 3                           | 3                      | 54                             | —                                     | 915                            | 69                            |
| Lithuania      | 1968 | 663                    | 96                          | 82                     | 80                             | —                                     | 825                            | 65                            |
|                | 1967 | 1,133                  | 561                         | 477                    | 171                            | —                                     | 1,781                          | 67                            |
| TOTALS         | 1968 | 139,799                | 87,459                      | 73,340                 | 109,049                        | 4,440                                 | 327,628                        | 84,339                        |
|                | 1967 | 132,315                | 60,102                      | 51,087                 | 87,568                         | 2,143                                 | 273,113                        | 65,306                        |

\* The number of books mailed is conventionally estimated to be 85% of the number of requests received.

*Statistics for PSPD's Book Distribution Program for 1965 and 1966*

| Country        | Year         | # of Scheduled Books Mailed | # of Books Requested | # of Requested Books Mailed* | # of Books Distributed Pers-to-pers | # of Books Distributed via "Personalized" Operations | Total # of Books Distributed |
|----------------|--------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Bulgaria       | 1965<br>1966 | 3,676<br>4,999              | 795<br>1,159         | 530<br>773                   | —<br>111                            | 59<br>288                                            | 4,265<br>4,171               |
| Czechoslovakia | 1965<br>1966 | 14,101<br>16,371            | 13,787<br>15,706     | 9,192<br>10,470              | 6,438<br>7,497                      | 91<br>435                                            | 29,822<br>34,773             |
| Estonia        | 1965<br>1966 | 1,824<br>851                | 58<br>18             | 39<br>12                     | —<br>—                              | —<br>—                                               | 1,863<br>863                 |
| Hungary        | 1965<br>1966 | 26,496<br>24,926            | 11,548<br>10,650     | 7,699<br>7,100               | 25,862<br>21,820                    | 111<br>381                                           | 60,168<br>54,227             |
| Latvia         | 1965<br>1966 | 698<br>739                  | 10<br>123            | 6<br>82                      | —<br>30                             | —<br>—                                               | 704<br>851                   |
| Lithuania      | 1965<br>1966 | 546<br>590                  | 132<br>109           | 88<br>73                     | —<br>—                              | —<br>4                                               | 634<br>667                   |
| Poland         | 1965<br>1966 | 36,186<br>30,316            | 10,984<br>11,240     | 7,322<br>7,494               | 29,978<br>32,215                    | 148<br>525                                           | 73,634<br>70,550             |
| Rumania        | 1965<br>1966 | 12,885<br>17,813            | 5,516<br>13,927      | 3,678<br>9,284               | —<br>238                            | 80<br>266                                            | 16,643<br>27,601             |
| TOTAL          | 1965<br>1966 | 96,412<br>96,605            | 42,830<br>52,932     | 28,554<br>35,288             | 62,278<br>61,911                    | 489<br>1,899                                         | 187,733<br>195,703           |

\* Requests are screened and we estimate that two-thirds of books requested are actually mailed.

*Number of books distributed, 1956–1973*

| Year   | Book titles | Books distributed | Person-to-person | Responses | Requests sent (requested) |
|--------|-------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------|---------------------------|
| 1956/2 | 127         | 87,283            | —                | 356       | —                         |
| 1957   | 1,035       | 327,840           | —                | 2,008     | 1,167                     |
| 1958   | 3,364       | 142,070           | —                | 4,534     | 3,121                     |
| 1959   | 2,126       | 111,769           | —                | 8,775     | 5,642                     |
| 1960   | —           | 74,861            | —                | 17,077    | 15,590                    |
| 1961   | —           | 72,313            | —                | 29,218    | 17,948                    |
| 1962   | —           | 85,674            | —                | 40,063    | 20,649                    |
| 1963   | —           | 108,711           | 23,407           | 64,301    | 41,237                    |
| 1964   | —           | 155,432           | 44,075           | 66,386    | 36,347                    |
| 1965   | 489         | 187,733           | 62,278           | 58,643    | 28,554<br>(42,830)        |
| 1966   | 1,899       | 195,703           | 61,911           | 57,119    | 35,288<br>(52,932)        |
| 1967   | 2,143       | 273,113           | 87,568           | 65,306    | 51,087<br>(60,102)        |
| 1968   | 4,440       | 327,628           | 109,049          | 84,339    | 73,340<br>(87,459)        |
| 1969   | 3,999       | 273,109           | 104,630          | 99,572    | 60,848<br>(135,667)       |
| 1970   | 3,007       | 220,794           | 86,525           | 75,224    | 43,139<br>(91,180)        |
| 1971   | 5,449       | 233,844           | 96,517           | 69,527    | 50,848<br>(79,028)        |
| 1972   | 3,415       | 230,237           | 93,199           | 64,439    | 51,431<br>(83,766)        |
| 1973/1 | 1,719       | 105,609           | 42,415           | 30,277    | 23,085<br>(38,357)        |

*The number of books known to have been received, 1967–68*

| Number of mailed books acknowledged by letter                              |                |                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
|                                                                            | 1967           | 1968           |
| Poland                                                                     | 16,113         | 15,988         |
| Czechoslovakia                                                             | 15,263         | 26,643         |
| Hungary                                                                    | 19,757         | 15,560         |
| Romania                                                                    | 19,756         | 22,074         |
| Bulgaria                                                                   | 2,346          | 2,683          |
| Estonia                                                                    | 23             | 20             |
| Latvia                                                                     | 182            | 153            |
| Lithuania                                                                  | 229            | 102            |
| <i>Total</i>                                                               | <i>70,669</i>  | <i>83,223</i>  |
| <i>Total number of books distributed person-to-person to all countries</i> | <i>87,568</i>  | <i>109,049</i> |
| <i>Total number of books for which we have confirmation of receipt</i>     | <i>158,237</i> | <i>192,272</i> |

*Adam Rudzki,  
courtesy of Marek  
Rudzki*



*János Boór*

*2 Park Ave. (FEC) and 475 Park Ave. South, NYC (IAC/ILC),  
courtesy of Richard Cummings*





*Zbigniew Brzezinski, Jerzy Giedroyc, and the Catholic priest Józef Sadzik  
in 1963 in Paris, courtesy of Kultura House, Maisons Laffitte, Paris*



*István Csicsery-Rónay,  
courtesy of Elisabeth Csicsery-Rónay*



*Andrzej  
Stypulkowski*

GEORG LUKÁCS  
BUDAPEST V.  
BELGRÁD RKP. I. V. EM. 2.  
TELEFON: 185-306

BUDAPEST, den 15. 1. 66

An den Verlag  
Philipp Reclam  
-----

Verehrte Herren !

Ich bestätige dankend den Empfang des Buches von Hübscher "Von Hegel zu Heidegger". Dass Sie so liebenswürdig sind, mir eine Wahl zwischen Büchern vorzuschlagen, bitte ich Sie, mir folgendes zu schicken:

Heiler: "Die Religionen der Menschheit",

Glockner: "Die Europäische Philosophie".

Im voraus herzlichen Dank.

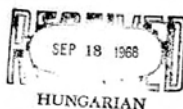
Ihr ergebener

*Georg Lukács*  
Georg Lukács

4159-14

*Books sent*

INTERNATIONAL BOOK CENTER  
1 EAST 57TH STREET  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10022



We are pleased to send you the enclosed book. Kindly let us know if you have received it by completing the information requested below:

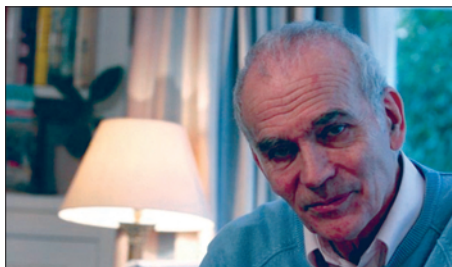
Book Received Mert and the Western World  
Name Georg Lukács  
Address Budapest V. Belgia's reprint?

George Lukács letter, courtesy of Alfred Reisch

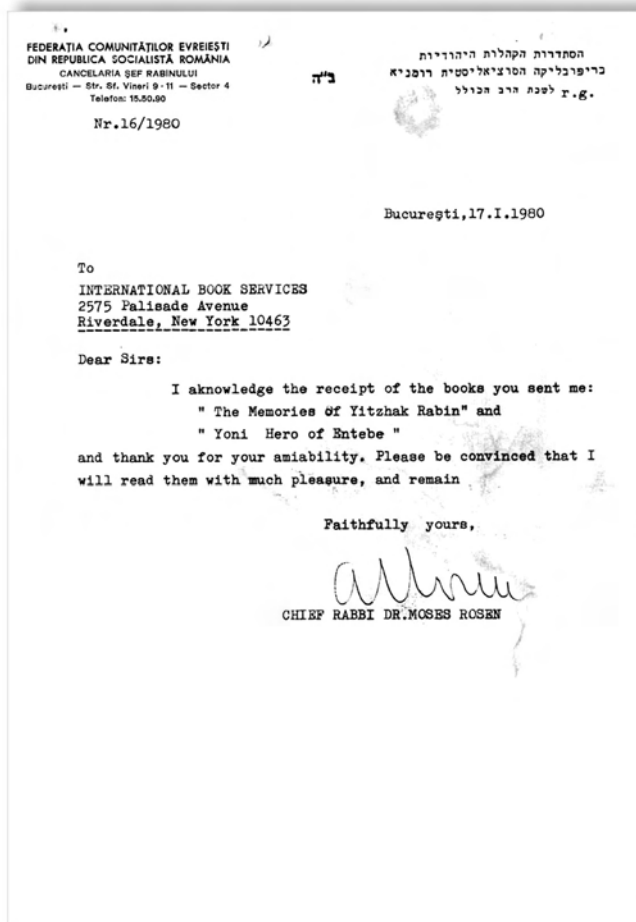




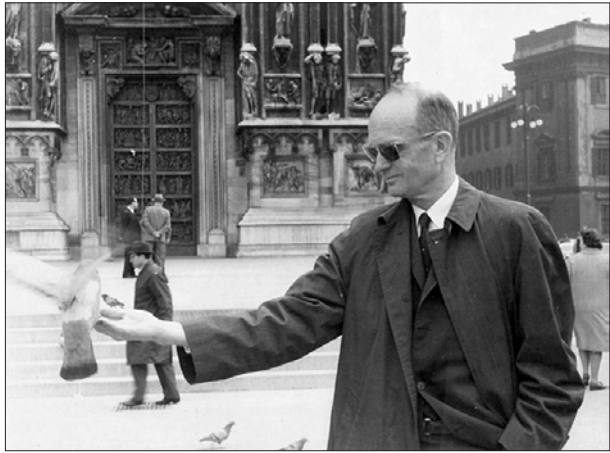
*George Minden, courtesy  
of Marilyn Minden*



*György Gömöri,  
photo by Otto Kaiser*



*Letter from Chief  
Rabbi Moses Rosen,  
courtesy of Ioana  
Alemanestianu*



*Isaac Patch, courtesy  
of Penny Patch*



*Peter Straka*



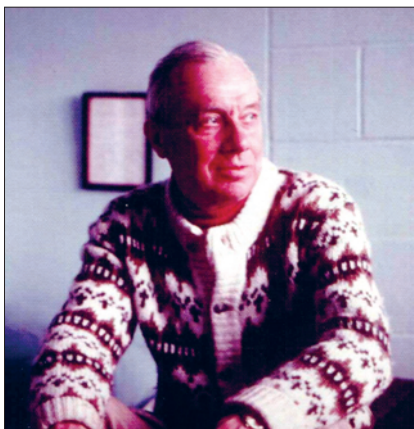
*The Hungarian edition  
of Panorama des idées  
contemporaines  
by Gaëtan Picon*



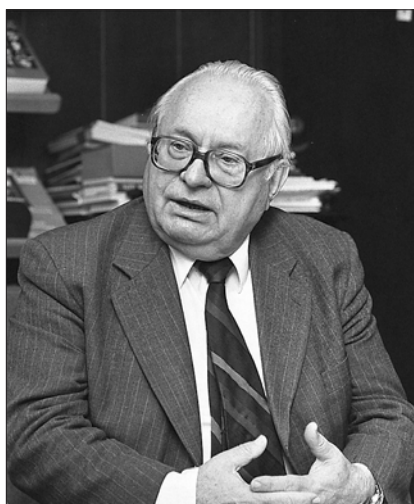
*Zdena Horak*



*Mátyás Sárközi*



*Vilem Brzorad,  
courtesy of  
Olga Brzorad*



*Ferenc Szabó*



Zsuzsa  
and  
Mátyás  
Triznya  
in Rome,  
courtesy  
of Zsuzsa  
Triznya

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|---------------------------|----------------------|-------|----------------|----------------------|--------------|--|--|--|-----------------|--|--|--|----------------|--|--|--|
| FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |          | 511.64/4-2760             |                      |       |                |                      |              |  |  |  |                 |  |  |  |                |  |  |  |
| FROM: AMERICAN LEGATION, BUDAPEST                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 592      | APR 28 1960               |                      |       |                |                      |              |  |  |  |                 |  |  |  |                |  |  |  |
| TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |          | April 27, 1960            |                      |       |                |                      |              |  |  |  |                 |  |  |  |                |  |  |  |
| REF: P-3 m.f.g.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |          |                           |                      |       |                |                      |              |  |  |  |                 |  |  |  |                |  |  |  |
| ACTION                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | RECEIVED | OTHER                     |                      |       |                |                      |              |  |  |  |                 |  |  |  |                |  |  |  |
| 5/3                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | RM/R     | CU-5 Spec. 1 m.f. 1       |                      |       |                |                      |              |  |  |  |                 |  |  |  |                |  |  |  |
| SUBJECT: HUNGARIAN REQUEST FOR BOOKS FROM INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL, INC.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |          |                           |                      |       |                |                      |              |  |  |  |                 |  |  |  |                |  |  |  |
| <p>(1) In recent weeks many Hungarian intellectuals, both in and out of favor with the regime, have been receiving cards from the International Advisory Council, Inc., Woodrow Wilson House, New York 21, New York, listing twenty five books and asking the recipient to choose any two as a gift from the Council.</p> <p>It is interesting to note that many did order books in the same manner last year but while some did receive their gifts many did not. The Hungarians believe that this was due to the fact that their reply was stopped by Hungarian "postal authorities", or the books were confiscated when they arrived in Hungary.</p> <p>Even though there is an element of chance as to whether the books will actually be received, the Hungarians getting the Council's cards appear to be quite pleased that a group in the West is interested in sending them books. In spite of Russian and regime propaganda to the contrary, many Hungarian intellectuals still look to the West for inspiration.</p> <p>For the Chargé d'Affaires ad interim:<br/>Ted M. Fagan<br/>Second Secretary of Legation<br/>6 May 1960</p> |          |                           |                      |       |                |                      |              |  |  |  |                 |  |  |  |                |  |  |  |
| <div style="float: right; text-align: right;">511.64/4-2760 HBS</div> <div style="text-align: center;"> </div>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |          |                           |                      |       |                |                      |              |  |  |  |                 |  |  |  |                |  |  |  |
| <div style="text-align: center;">OFFICIAL USE ONLY</div> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>ACTION</td> <td>TAKEN</td> <td>DATE OF ACTION</td> <td>DIRECTIONS TO BUREAU</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ASSIGNED TO:</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>NAME OF OFFICER</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>SERVICE SYMBOL</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |          |                           | ACTION               | TAKEN | DATE OF ACTION | DIRECTIONS TO BUREAU | ASSIGNED TO: |  |  |  | NAME OF OFFICER |  |  |  | SERVICE SYMBOL |  |  |  |
| ACTION                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | TAKEN    | DATE OF ACTION            | DIRECTIONS TO BUREAU |       |                |                      |              |  |  |  |                 |  |  |  |                |  |  |  |
| ASSIGNED TO:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |          |                           |                      |       |                |                      |              |  |  |  |                 |  |  |  |                |  |  |  |
| NAME OF OFFICER                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |          |                           |                      |       |                |                      |              |  |  |  |                 |  |  |  |                |  |  |  |
| SERVICE SYMBOL                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |          |                           |                      |       |                |                      |              |  |  |  |                 |  |  |  |                |  |  |  |
| <div style="text-align: center;">ACTION COPY — DEPARTMENT OF STATE</div> <p>The action office must return this permanent record copy to RM/R file with an endorsement of action taken.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |          |                           |                      |       |                |                      |              |  |  |  |                 |  |  |  |                |  |  |  |

U.S.  
Embassy  
Letter,  
Budapest,  
National  
Archives

*Zdenek  
Mastnik,  
BBC  
archives*



*Cord Meyer*



*Ioana  
Alimanestianu*

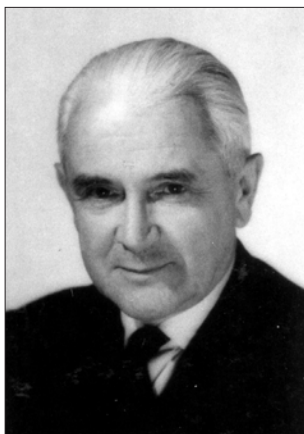


*Sam  
Walker Jr.,  
courtesy  
of Beth  
Walker*





*John  
Richardson,  
Jr. , Hoover  
Institution  
Archives*



*Zygmunt  
Kallenbach,  
IPN  
Warsaw*



*Vilmos Juhász,  
courtesy of  
Joseph B.  
Juhász*



*Jerzy  
Giedroyc,  
photo by  
B. Paczowski,  
culture.pl*

1959. szeptember 21.  
Aczél György levele  
a külföldről érkező könyvek beszolgáltatásáról.

Művelődésügyi Minisztérium  
Budapest, V. Szalai u. 10.

Ügyszám: 0040/1959-1  
Tárgy: ellenséges prop.anyag  
Előadó: Szekeres Pál

SZIGORUAN TITKOS!

Valamennyi Főigazgatóság, Főosztály, Önálló Osztály  
Vezetőjének

Valamennyi Megyei, Megyei Jogú Városi Tanács Vb. Művelődés-  
ügyi Osztálya és a  
Fővárosi Tanács Vb. Népművelési Osztálya Vezetőjének,

Székhelyén

Néhány könyvtárunk, tudományos és felsőoktatási intézményünk s azok egyes vezetői és munkatársai nem túl gyakran, de hosszabb idő óta postai úton különböző tőkés országokból ellenséges politikai propagandát szolgáló kiadványokat, sajtótermékeket kapnak. Mivel ezek a kiadványok, ha kismértékben is, de zavarhatják békés építő munkánkat, felkérem, haladéktalanul utasítsa a felügyelete alá tartozó egyetemi központi, kari, tanszéki, főiskolai, megyei

könyvtárak, múzeumok, levéltárak vezetőit, illetékes beosztottjait, hogy ilyen jellegű, általuk meg nem rendelt, csereforgalomban nem igényelt magyar, vagy idegen nyelvű kiadványokat – a beérkezés napján szolgáltatassák be az Országos Széchényi Könyvtár Zárt Osztályának, ahol azok – illetékesek engedélyével – hozzáférhetők mind a tudományos, mind egyéb indokolt célokra.

Utasításom végrehajtásáról f. év október hó 15-ig kérem írásbeli jelentését.

Budapest, 1959. szeptember 21.

Aczél György s.k.

Kiadvány hiteles:

Marton István  
Irodavezető

*György Aczél's order to surrender all foreign books and journals serving enemy propaganda. Hungarian National Archives, Budapest.*

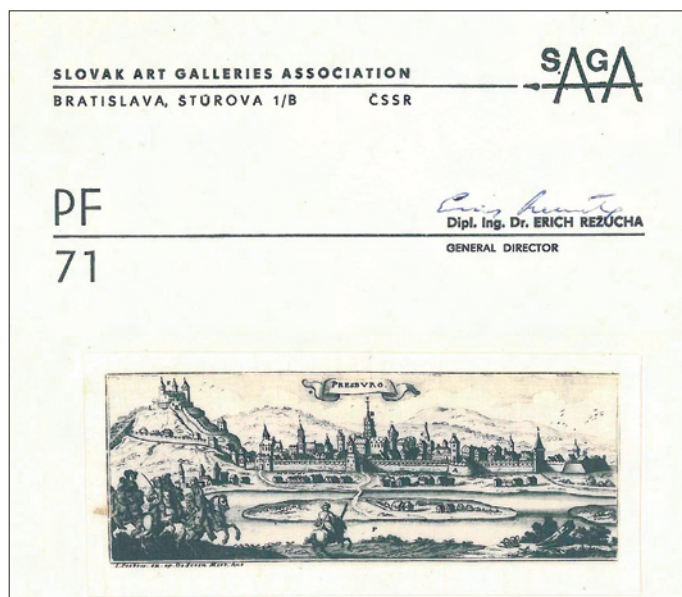


*Envelopes of letters acknowledging the receipt of books. To express their gratitude, many recipients would put beautiful stamps on their letters.*





*Envelopes of letters acknowledging the receipt of books. To express their gratitude, many recipients would put beautiful stamps on their letters.*



*Greeting card from Czechoslovakia, acknowledging receipt*

By opening minds, the imaginative book program helped to break down the walls behind which the communist regimes were entrenched.

*Zbigniew Brzezinski, Former U.S. National Security Advisor*

That over ten million books and periodicals were successfully mailed to East European countries as an important part of the West's psychological warfare against Communist ideology is a Cold War operation very little known. Thousands upon thousands of educated East Europeans, among them members of my family and friends, had their views fundamentally changed by the arrival of forward-looking literary, cultural, and scientific products. The Secret Book Distribution Program powerfully contributed to the peaceful transformation of Eastern Europe in and after 1989.

*István Deák, Emeritus Professor of History, Columbia University*

A well-documented pioneering analysis of the "book program" that complemented Western broadcasts and provided Western literature to East Europeans and Russians during the Cold War. Highly recommended for anyone interested in U.S. Cold War foreign policy.

*A. Ross Johnson, Woodrow Wilson Center*

The secret book distribution program to Eastern Europe funded by the CIA during the Cold War gave hope and courage to thousands of intellectuals and other dissidents. It helped to cultivate the seeds of opposition and contributed to the eventual triumph of reason over dogmatism. Alfred Reisch's book fills in an important gap in our understanding of how the United States effectively used the "soft power" of information not only to promote democracy but to contribute to the collapse of European communism. The word indeed proved mightier than the sword.

*Janusz Bugajski, policy analyst, writer, and lecturer based in the United States*

Scholars of the Cold War and Public Diplomacy, as well as the general public, should welcome publication of this book which is the first detailed account of a previously little-known cultural program of the United States that helped to win the Cold War. Written by an insider who worked on the program at the time, it relates how Western books breached the Iron Curtain.

*Yale Richmond, Foreign Service, Retired*

The CIA-funded book program strengthened the positive forces of nationalism and helped maintain the spirit of independence which ultimately overcame the foreign-imposed regimes. Alfred Reisch's groundbreaking work sheds light on this little known effort. History shows that those who print and distribute books work for progress and enlightenment, while those who burn books will also burn people.

*Thomas Polgar, retired CIA official*

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